[P.36]

III

The Village Setting

621 **Part of the story of Greek survival lies in the village form of organization.**
361 To be sure, the city has exercised a tremendous sway over the thought and
[369] mood of the Greek people in the past and even more so today. But a
peasant's tangible world has been his village. We see the village first of all
as a place with a focal point, or square, from which emanate streets, lanes,
or paths winding in adjustment to the local surface features. As a place,
[491] the village has increasing connections with the outside world, since new
roads continue to replace donkey tracks which until recently led from the
[487] more isolated areas.

But the village is also a service center where the farm family can shop or get some local artisan to make or repair household or farm equipment. In the rural areas of Greece, as elsewhere, these village services do not extend to waste disposal, this being the responsibility of the individual family. Viewed from another point, the village is a collection of houses, yards, and gardens, which also deserve a brief description if one is to see the backdrop against which so much of the peasant's daily life occurs.

621 In the village the rural Greek has found a pattern of life which gives him
the many advantages of a close-knit community and at the same time allows
[476] him to farm his land, exchange work and implements with his relatives or
[438] neighbors, sell his crops, and care for his animals in a common pasture,
[233] frequently under the care of a common swineherd or shepherd. Agricultural

Agricultural

experts are rightly questioning some of the obvious economic difficulties of 241
trying to farm several scattered strips from a village home base, but they 621
sometimes forget the social efficiencies found in a village in contrast to the
isolated farmstead. Some of this social efficiency becomes apparent as soon
as one arrives in the *plateia*, the village square.

THE PLATEIA

Any visitor from outside is expected by the villagers to make his identity 621
and business known as soon as possible, not to conform to any legal or 609
police requirements but to satisfy the lively, usually friendly village curiosity.
The plateia is the stage for this performance. Upon entering the village, one 574
heads toward the most imposing coffeehouse in the plateia. A reception 275
committee springs apparently from nowhere in the person of the local
village president or some other dignitary. By the time the coffeehouse is
reached, the visitor becomes the honored guest and is asked what refreshment
he prefers — coffee or something stronger. Meanwhile, four or five
other men, who consider themselves important enough locally to display
such forwardness, join the reception committee at the table. Others stand
around to watch what the strangers do and to listen to the conversation.
Such situations call to mind the observation of a traveler through the
Balkans and Eastern Europe half a century ago, who pointed out that when
the Russian or the Turk had no business to occupy him, he went home;
but when the Greek or the Jew had nothing to do, he stood on the corner
of the square hoping something would turn up.[1] After the newcomers
have observed the formalities and explained the purpose of the visit, every- [272]
one can then sit back and relax to drink the sirupy coffee or to give one's [273]
throat a chance to cool after each swallow of the fiery *ouzo*. Only then can
the visitor really devote his attention to what the people who pass through
the square are doing or wearing.

First there are the children, some of them startled as they suddenly 621
see their reflection in the shiny chromium automobile bumper; other
youngsters settle down to some simple game after the visitor becomes 609
monopolized by the older people. Next comes a man carrying pottery jars 574
to the fountain at the edge of the square, getting water for his coffeeshop [312]
around the corner. Peasants on their way from the fields ride their carts
through the square, with a spare horse used for plowing led along behind.
The animals as well as the very small children shy away from the automobile.
Women look from the windows of the nearby houses at the group [275]
at the tables under the trees in front of the coffeehouse, but only very few
ever venture close enough to hear what the men are talking about. A bus [494]
from the city pulls in with a roar and a clatter and quickly becomes the
center of attention.

As the sights and sounds of the people and the animals become familiar, 361

TOBACCO GROWING IN THRACE

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During an interview with some peasants in the office of the commune secretary of Toxotae in Thrace during May 1955, I was surprised to see some of the men pull out pink cigarette paper in which they expertly rolled cigarettes for a leisurely smoke.

"But why the pink paper?" I wanted to know.

"We are tobacco producers," they answered with an air of distinct pride. "We can keep some of the crop for our own use, but must use pink paper to distinguish our cigarettes from those that are bought."

"Yes," a gendarme added. "Any time I see a person smoking a pink cigarette I can go up to ask for a certificate showing that he is a tobacco grower and thus entitled to 'roll his own'!"

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This conversation, which lasted for more than four hours, gave me an even better understanding of tobacco farming than I had gained on previous trips, as did frequent visits in the fields with the peasants who were transferring the plants from the seedbeds to the carefully prepared land or hauling barrels of water in their oxcart from a spring or well to the place where the planting was going on. What was most helpful of all, however, was the intimate story of one tobacco village, as described in the Near East Foundation study mentioned earlier. It gave me a deeper realization of the problems that the people there continue to face.[7]

● 621
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Dafnon, a village of 1145 people in 1952, is northwest of the city of Xanthe. This community, like so many in Northern Greece, was settled by Greek refugees from Asia Minor and the Pontus following the departure of 127 Turkish families in 1924. By 1935, 294 families had moved in, attracted as they were by the rich vegetation, the good climate of this semi-mountainous area, and the possibility of raising a high-priced product such as tobacco. When the first official land redistribution was carried out in 1935, and a second in 1938, it became apparent that the allotments were too small for the support of a family, and so people began to leave. Today there are 255 families.

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The village, covering slightly over 70 acres, sprawls over a hill. Two former Turkish mosques have been converted into Greek Orthodox churches; six grocery shops have total assets of less than $1700; three of the six coffeehouses attract the young men because each has a gramophone and a battery radio; the village school, destroyed along with many of the houses during the guerrilla war in 1948, was rebuilt in 1950. Outside the village is an athletic field on which 30 young men, members of the sports club, practice faithfully in an effort to uphold their reputation as the best football (soccer) team in the area. In the evening, the streets are dark, for Dafnon has no electricity and its people must rely upon kerosene lamps.

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Of the 255 families previously mentioned, 220 own land; 32 own no

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land but work rented land or as farm laborers; and three are in business 463
(baker, coffeehouse proprietor, and dressmaker). Some of these landowners, in addition to farming, run a local business, or practice a trade [423]
such as carpentering and smithing, but their basic orientation is toward the land.

Being farmers, one might assume that they could grow some of their 621
own food. A few manage to do this. Of the 589 acres of cultivated land
belonging to the village people, 338 acres are in tobacco. This cash crop, 241
therefore, takes up about 57 percent of all arable land. Corn accounts for 511
187 acres, vegetable gardens 25 acres, potatoes 20 acres, alfalfa 6 acres, and other crops 13 acres. But no matter what methods one uses in Dafnon, it is impossible to grow enough food for 1145 people on the shallow land. There are two ways out: first, grow a cash crop such as tobacco, sell it, and use the income to buy food and other necessities; the second is for a large number of families to be resettled elsewhere and thus provide sufficient land for those that remain. The latter suggestion is impossible, since other rural areas are also overcrowded and the opportunities in the cities are not yet equal to the demand of those making the exodus from the rural
areas. Indeed, cities have been discouraging the influx of new families in [369]
search of work.

This leaves only the other possibility of getting most of the family income 249
from tobacco alone. Here, again, the tobacco producer is caught at the
mercy of the market or in the "price scissors." Without food of his own 435
production, he has to sell his tobacco at any price offered simply in order 511
to have bread for his children. The producer, according to this study of
Dafnon, knew that tobacco prices, including the premium paid by the state, [458]
had risen over prewar prices 260 times. This was small consolation for,
in reading *Vema*, an Athenian newspaper dated December 14, 1951, he [204]
also learned that costs of foodstuffs had risen 425 times, clothing 554 times, fuel 394 times, sundries 367 times, manufactured goods 467 times, and imported supplies 416 times.

It is difficult to grow tobacco, particularly the Oriental type (Basmas 249
variety) that requires so much manipulation, leaf by leaf, with an average leaf being four inches long and two and one-half inches wide. The first plowing is usually done in February or March. Seedbeds are heavily manured, and the seed is well mixed with sand and ashes, then sown. The beds are pressed down by foot for better germination; sieved manure is scattered over them; and the beds are watered. This watering is continued, usually morning and evening, until the end of May when the plants are ready to be transplanted. Because of this need for water, the beds are always located near some accessible water supply.

The tobacco fields are usually plowed under three times before the tobacco plants are set out. The same fields are used for tobacco year after [242]

will buy to put on his lead ram. Then he will pick another deep bell for his 233
eldest ewe, but will always test it against the deepest bell for what seems to
be harmony to his ear. As he buys the smaller bells with the higher sounds, 533
he always compares each with the deepest bell. In a flock of about 200, he may have as many as 60 to 70 carefully tested bells. The sound of a flock grazing or in movement is always pleasing even to the casual passerby. But to the shepherd it is the sweetest music of all, for it is as though his own private orchestra were playing for him, telling him by each little sound much about the behavior of his flock. If one note is missing for very long, he becomes aware of it and investigates to see what is wrong. When all are ringing together, he feels his little universe is safe.

As I walked through the village, I tried to picture it in the cold and 221
empty winter. Obviously, the people from Valtetsi scatter out quite widely
once they get below. What kind of community can they maintain with 621
such a migration pattern? The shepherd's answers to queries about organizational life gave a rough sketch of the Valtetsi community.

Like other villages, they have the village council. The president of the [623]
council, who happens to run a coffeehouse, must stay in the village through-
out the year. He can, on occasion, get a two-week leave from the prefect [622]
in Tripolis.

"Suppose he owned livestock," I asked, "and had to take them to winter pastures below. What would he do?"

"Other members of his family would have to take care of the animals for him and he would remain here."

Local elections are postponed from winter until the return of most of [666]
the people in the spring. But for national elections the men leave the flocks with their womenfolk and older children and walk all the way back up to the village to cast their ballots.

Valtetsi also has its school board, church board, and a livestock co- [871]
operative that helps its members get some credit from the Agricultural [794]
Bank, with their flocks as collateral (it serves no marketing function). Yet
the migration pattern affects even these organizations, for at the time of [474]
my visit the cooperative president had not yet returned from his winter's [652]
sojourn on the plain nor had all of the board members for the church or [233]
the school.

In spite of the periodic absence of its inhabitants, the loyalty to Valtetsi 621
is strong. Not the least of village distinctions was the Battle of Valtetsi, in
which local people claim that in 1821 the first victorious army of Greeks [186]
under Kolokotrones rose up against the Turks. Since the soldiers believed [175]
that the Virgin had aided that victory, taking part just as Hera and
Athena did with their forces deployed in the Trojan War, a special church [776]
to the Virgin was built in the village in 1837. One of the most heinous [669]
[778]

Peloponnesos
[Shepherds]

●621 crimes of the Communist guerrillas in the late 1940s, according to the
669 people, was their willful mutilation by bullets of some of the church's prized
[778] icons of the Virgin and saints.

Even when their houses are repaired and a new school is built as a result
233 of a gift by former Valtetsi residents now in the United States, the problems
427 of the people will not be solved. Every year they find it more difficult to
locate grazing land for their flocks on the plains below, and they cannot
241 get back to their prewar standard of living unless they can double or treble
[511] the number of their sheep. One complained: "The different owners down below are putting in crops on the land that used to lie fallow. They ask more money if we increase the size of our flocks. Since I had trouble with the man from whom I have been renting in the past near Kranidi, this year I went to Messenia instead. I made arrangements with a farmer to bring my flock there, paid him in advance, but when I got there with my sheep he had plowed the land promised to me and had planted potatoes. He had even plowed beneath the olive trees so that there was no grass for my sheep. I could only pasture one month there, lost the money I had paid in advance, and had to come back to Valtetsi ahead of schedule to get pasture for my flock."

233 Other shepherds in the Peloponnesos are saying the same thing. Some,
234 with whom we talked on the road from Kalamata to Megalopolis, were
511 anxious to get to their home villages in the mountains. They were carrying
their milk- and cheese-making equipment with them, but their women and
[221] children had gone on ahead to get the houses ready for summer occupancy. One man complained: "I haven't been able to make ends meet although I have two hundred sheep and have sold four thousand okas of milk. The pasture didn't grow because of the dry weather and I had to buy fodder for my animals."

233 We found some of the men working with others in partnerships termed *sebries*. One variety of sebria calls for a shepherd to look after and main-
474 tain the flock of another for three years. The losses and profits are equally shared. After the three-year time limit is up, each sebros (partner) takes by lot half of the common flock. If the cooperation comes to an end before the expected time limit, the division is made differently; that is, if it lasted for two years, the flock is divided into three parts and each partner takes one part; the third part is divided, two thirds to the man who owned the flock originally and one third to the shepherd. If it lasted one year, the owner receives five sixth and the shepherd one sixth of this third part. Another variation of the sebria was the pooling of animals by the owners into a flock which they jointly managed as a common flock and whose products they distributed in a proportion equal to the number of sheep contributed to the flock. This arrangement is made if the pasture land is too large for one man to manage. But even such cooperative arrangements

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but these did not hamper the family's activities at all — "Just like a flea on an elephant," as one of my informants put it.

Originally, late in the nineteenth century, when the family began to rise to prominence, there were four brothers. The second brother became the head, "because he had the most brains," it was said. Upon his death the eldest became head. When the eldest died, the third in line took over until he was killed by the Italians in 1940. Since that time the fourth brother has been chief. Now the family is said to be so numerous that it has run out of names and so has called the most recent arrival "Petoules Petoules." The chief's consent is necessary for the marriage arrangements for everyone in the family and also for all of the hired shepherds employed by it. The family still sticks solely to livestock production but is building huge refrigerators for the cheese awaiting sale and delivery.

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The Petoules family is now the exception rather than the rule. For many years to come the tselingata will exist in modified form, but more and more the central government will become a substitute for the arbitrary rule of the chief shepherd.[15] Where some old patriarch still holds sway, his grandsons coming back from a tour of duty in the army will plague him with their new ideas, and many will, as many are already doing, refuse to go off on lonely vigils with their flocks. Today hired shepherds are hard to find and the army experience is mentioned over and over again as the cause of the shift to other occupations. Young men with vision, seeing that the future lies elsewhere, are planning accordingly.

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STRESS AND STRAIN

The changing life of the shepherd is seen not only in the movement of his flocks from one pasture to another and in his adjustment to the solitude of days away from home; many facets of his life also are revealed in the study of his village, as our visit to Valtetsi showed. The real stress and strain between two coexistent ways of life — pastoralism and agriculture — are felt in personal community relationships even more than in the impersonal contacts between peasants and shepherds on the highway.

Greek villages, of course, run the gamut from those where every family is primarily pastoral to those where the only sheep or goats kept are the two or three around the house for a small family milk supply. In between are those with a mixed economy.[16] Two villages of this type, both of which happen to be in Roumele, illustrate the kind of conflict that springs up between farmers and livestock owners, a conflict reminiscent of our earlier American West with the hostility between the open-range cattlemen and the sodbusters who put up barbed-wire fences.

In the first village, near Mesolongi, the farmers complain that they have no security in their fields because the livestock owners have the major power and influence and they follow the old tradition of allowing the flocks

to graze all over the community area as soon as the harvest is in. If the 233
farmers leave any grain in the fields after harvesting, the sheep seem to 241
think it part of their daily ration and tackle it with delight. The farmers 578
have little recourse, since the sheep owners are elected as community coun- 621
cilmen and officers of the cooperative and are always in a position to defend
their interests.

Much the same situation prevails in a village near Agrinion where over
seven thousand sheep and over one thousand goats are kept. Recently,
some of what was formerly pasture land has been distributed to those with- [423]
out land, through a cooperative association newly formed for that purpose, [474]
thus restricting the amount of grazing area. These new owners, as well as
others without livestock, resent the invasion of their fields by the flocks immediately after harvest. Little control can be exercised unless shepherds so desire, for none of the parcels are fenced off and it is customary to let the animals roam at will when crops are in.

The nomarch of Serrai stated that in his area of Macedonia it was very common for the whole community to rise up in protest against the pasturing of the flocks by shepherds on land belonging to the community. The shepherds insist that they will continue to use these lands; so the villagers come to the nomarch and ask whether or not they must let those so-and-sos graze sheep on their land. The nomarch assures them that they are within their rights to keep the shepherds off, and they leave the office with a determined look, as though no number of shepherds could budge them from their resolve. When these local leaders get back home, some shepherd comes up to them and says: "My sheep will die, my family will die if you don't let me use that land." The people then change their minds and give the shepherd permission to graze his flocks there. Later on, when they see the nomarch and he asks them what happened, they say: "Poor man, we couldn't let him starve, so we let the sheep graze there." But such disputes do not always end so amicably.

Another source of conflict is the lowly goat. The parties to the conflict
are not peasants arguing it out with one another, but rather the forest serv- 233
ice trying to forbid the peasants from keeping goats. During the dictator- 578
ship of General Metaxas (1936–1941), a law was passed and enforced 185
which forbade the peasants from keeping goats. The justification for this
measure is that goats, a browsing animal, do much more damage to the [656]
forests than do sheep, a grazing animal. In the case of a pastoral village in
Western Macedonia, not far from Kastoria, the prewar number of eight [669]
thousand sheep and goats shrank during the conflict because of requisition
by the guerrillas, army of occupation, and such, to seven hundred and fifty.
In order to rebuild livestock numbers quickly as a means of eking out a
living, the people got together flocks of goats. The Agricultural Office has [654]
supported them in this, while the Forestry Office opposes the idea. The

THE ENGAGEMENT

Once dowry arrangements have been completed, the couple becomes 584
engaged. This is invariably a festive occasion at the home of the girl, which [574]
calls not only for the hiring of musicians but frequently the preparation of
special dishes, such as fried octopus, and the serving of great quantities of 262
brandy and special liqueurs. The significance of the engagement is stressed [273]
by the fact that it often involves the village and not just the families con-
cerned. One day while riding muleback in the mountains of Epirus we heard [621]
the sound of music from a distance. As we approached a small hamlet,
small because most people were afraid to live in that politically unsettled 361]
area, we recognized the music as that of the *daouli* (big drum) and bagpipe. [534]
As we passed through, the president of the community came out and invited
us to stop and join in the festivities. Here, as elsewhere, I learned that there [273]
were ceremonial ways in which the couple plight their troth: exchange of
glasses of sweet liqueur from which they each drink and, more importantly, [301]
the exchange of heavy rings. If both sets of parents are alive, it is the custom
in the Peloponnesos for the bride's mother to be the first to hand the rings
over to the couple, the groom's father then repeats this, and the bride's does [793]
so for the third time. The priest is not involved nor is the *koumbaros* (spon-
sor at the wedding to follow and godparent at the baptism) called upon at [608]
this time.

The engagement period is not viewed as a time of exploration and reaching a decision by the young people as to whether they are actually suited to each other; in Greece, once engaged, the couple is expected to marry, and there is almost no breaking off of an engagement. This step is regarded as serious as the wedding itself, for it is a public recognition that two families are to be related. But customs during the engagement period vary considerably in Greece. For example, the customary length of engagement may vary from one week or less in a few villages to less than a year in other places, although most generally the engagement period would be at least a
year. This is a feverish period of activity on the part of the family to ensure [583]
the collection of all necessary dowry items. In some parts of Greece the
young man may go to live in the home of his future in-laws if he is needed [591]
there. He may be working in the village where he found his bride-to-be and, rather than maintain separate bachelor's quarters or board with some other family, he may move into his future home. Or, if he has no fields of his own and goes to work on his in-laws' estate, he will probably move into the in-
laws' home. In Aetolia, if the boy is from a different village, he can come [574]
from time to time to the bride's house for a visit of a few days; if he is
from the same village, he also can visit the home but seldom spends a night there.

The casual way in which young people occasionally talked about their engagement stressed the social rather than personal aspects of this experi-

THE ANNUAL VILLAGE FESTIVAL

The annual village festival, held on the name day of the saint for whom 527
the local church is named, although a community event, serves also as an [776]
occasion for absent family members to return for a visit.[3] On such days 574
literally hundreds and sometimes more than a thousand outsiders visit the
village to join in the local excitement. Many families have so many guests [621]
that they hardly know where to put them all; food and drink are plentiful, 535
and dancing is the order of the day. The local shopkeepers count heavily
on this occasion to bring them out of the red, even though traveling mer- 443
chants also make their appearance to take care of the swollen number of
clients. The local government sees to it that these outsiders or their trans- 651
actions are taxed. A relatively few attend the masses being held in the 796
church since the festival is more secular than religious. One is impressed in
talking with villagers about these festivals how frequently they stress the [292]
fact that they all "put on the best clothes and new clothes if possible" in
order to make a good impression upon the visitors and other villagers as
well.

Throughout Greece one can see many well-known national dances on 535
these festival days. Most of them are round dances, with the dancers hold-
ing on to hands or wrists of those next to them. The musicians stand in the [533]
center of the circle and strike up the tune. A slow "dragging-trailing" dance
is called the *syrtos;* one calling for jumping or leaping steps is a *pidictos;*
and others are mixed. Many of these dances have much in common with
ancient dances depicted on friezes or described in the writings of classical
times.

An example of the syrtos type is the *kalamatianos*, named for the town
of Kalamata in the southern Peloponnesos. Here the dancers hold each
other by the wrist. The leader of the dance may break away from the circle
and go through gyrations which would do credit to a professional acrobat;
throughout this performance he flutters his handkerchief (the symbol of
leadership), and when ready he may throw the handkerchief to his neigh-
bor or someone else who wishes to lead the dance. The *geranos*, another 535
syrtos dance, is supposed to have been danced by Theseus and the youths 773
and maidens with him on Delos when he returned there after slaying the
Minotaur on Crete. The movements of the dance are said to imitate the
twists and turns of the labyrinth which was the lair of the mythological
monster.[4]

Another syrtos dance is the *zalongos*, which commemorates the dance of the Souliote women in Epirus who, upon the defeat of their men folk in December 1803 by Ali Pasha of Ioannina, took refuge on a high and inaccessible rock situated above the river Acheron, where they began to dance and, still dancing, threw themselves over the precipice into the gap-

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being busily involved in some work project of his own. At two o'clock Yannes planned to serve olives, onions, and bread with plenty of red resinated wine.

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We could not stay much longer with the potato diggers, for we still had to carry our greetings to the village farther on. But a few days later I did return to Neochori and went to Yannes' home to find out who had been invited and why. In some ways this visit proved even more interesting than the sojourn in the potato field. The men were all away from the house; so Yannes' wife invited us into the square room which served as the center of family life. We sat around a table and began to list the twenty-five men and the eighteen women who had been a part of the mutual-aid group. Soon we saw neighboring women peering at us through the open window; then they moved on around to the door where they could hear better what we were talking about. News of our arrival must have spread like magic, for before we completed our list the room was full of women — some sitting on the beds along the wall, but several standing in order to observe more minutely everything that was going on. It was out of the question to interview the wife confidentially about why she invited some women and not others. As a matter of fact, two or three women had already taken it upon themselves to answer every question put to Yannes' wife, so that she was simply nodding in assent to what they said.

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In no time at all, with the help of the most vocal members of the group, we had listed the relationship of each potato worker to Yannes and his wife. A later count of this information showed that, after we excluded Yannes, the commission merchant, and his one helper from outside, only six of the twenty-two remaining men were unrelated to Yannes. Each of these six persons was a neighbor. Of the seventeen women invited (excluding Yannes' wife), all but four were related to Yannes, but four were neighbors. Thus it was evident that family considerations and neighboring played a significant part, even to the point that some relatives who were not good workers were invited "because they were relatives." In other words, family values rather than economic values, such as efficiency, came into play.

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We had noted that many of the women in the potato field were in their late teens or early twenties and found that they were preferred to the middle-aged women who are, of course, not excluded. Perhaps the younger ones have stronger backs and have no grounds for refusing if their father or husband tells them to go and help. Although a man is preferred for this kind of work, there would be no ill feeling if Yannes repaid some man who helped him by sending one of the women in his household. "We don't keep such close count that such a substitution bothers us" was the way one woman reacted.

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In the course of our crowded group interview we learned that women

474 been accustomed to working together. Even more, the cooperative becomes
closely identified with the central government, which immediately introduces
476 not only nonfamilial but even nonlocal considerations. This is a
178 psychological gap which many peasants cannot quickly cross. Promoters of
cooperatives from outside may see in them a strong support of family and
village values; but the peasant sees in them the impersonality of the political
authority, the introduction of money rather than exchange of labor as the
unit of measurement, and, at times, even questions the motives of those
"who are running around trying to get us to join something we don't know
anything about." Throughout Greece I found villages at all degrees of opposition
or readiness for cooperatives, but where there was resistance these
three difficulties were present along with a dozen other reasons the people
gave to explain why they did not want to join.

474 The cooperative movement, like so much in Greece, has an interesting
past. One important landmark noted by students of cooperatives in Greece
438 was the rise of Ambelakia, a city on the Peneios River in Northern Greece,
which became such an important manufacturing center of cotton and silk
goods in the seventeenth century that it had trade connections throughout
Europe. Its dyed thread was particularly well known then, although its
wine is its only product renowned today. Ambelakia rose to economic
474 greatness because of the well-run association which administered the community's
affairs. Although this may have been more in the tradition of the
●621 guild than a modern cooperative, it nevertheless showed what a single community
could do if it organized its efforts in a systematic fashion.[8] The association
of Ambelakia, as well as the modern cooperative movement, is
thought by some to have its roots deep in the traditions of local self-government,
as the later discussion of this topic will show. Not only would one
community organize itself as a viable political and economic unit, but several
communities in an area would band together to deal with the Turkish
masters. But, significant as these unions were, they were quite different
474 in scope and intent from the agricultural-cooperative movement in Greece
426 today which goes back to 1900. At that time a schoolteacher in the village
of Almyros in Thessaly, aroused over the fact that local usurers were
[875] charging peasants interest rates as high as 100 percent, organized a local
credit or loan society which he called a mutual treasury. This type of organization
spread to many communities throughout the country.

474 In 1915 a new law provided for the establishment of cooperatives, with
at least seven persons required to form a society. Such a cooperative could
656 be of unlimited liability, with each member having one vote, or it could be
of limited liability, with those having more shares being allowed up to
five votes but no more. The Cooperative Act provided certain privileges:
exemption from import duties on agricultural implements and machinery,
seeds, spray materials, and other essential agricultural materials for the

474 get a cooperative, we will have to wait a year to get a loan approved, and by [652] that time we will have no need for the money." They thought that from 12 to 14 percent would be the customary interest charges set by the cooperative and the Bank and also assumed that security requirements would be very high.

[249] Peasants in the tobacco-growing areas in Northern Greece appreciated the fact that cooperatives there tried to introduce mechanization and also, [664] from time to time, did some lobbying in their behalf. When in 1953 we asked the commandant of gendarmerie for Volos, who was in close touch [124] with the villagers, about their views toward cooperatives he replied: "With the occupation and the war the cooperative conscience more or less disappeared. Now it is reviving and if things go normally there will be quick improvement. One reason for the difficulty is the effort by the government to mix politics in with the cooperative movement. Now the cooperatives undertake no teaching function. They did this before the war, which partially explained what success they achieved. Before the war, if a person wanted to be on the council of the cooperative, he had to go through special training. [654] The authorities say that they will do this again, but the Ministry of Agriculture is centering its teaching approach in the newly formed Agro Clubs."

He thought that in his area about 60 percent of the cooperatives were working and that 40 percent were either anemic or altogether defunct. [241] Around Volos the producers' and marketing cooperatives organized on a commodity basis — vegetables, dairy, fruit, olives — worked better than the general-purpose or purely credit type. Very often, he pointed out, the rela- [652] tionship between the local cooperative and the representatives of the Agricultural Bank is strained, for the local council will give inaccurate information to the Bank, saying that a would-be borrower has twelve acres of land when he really has only five.

474 One of the most interesting examples of the blending of traditional and 178 modern mutual-aid practices was found in Kalivi, a village of about 2500 in Attica. This village owned some pasture land. In 1914 it formed a com- [621] mittee which took charge of the management of this community land, deriving revenues for the community. In 1920 there was talk of organizing a cooperative, but it did not really get under way until 1926, at which time the village pasture land was turned over to the cooperative which superseded the former committee. Thus, the transition from the older social form [652] to the cooperative went smoothly. The Agricultural Bank had helped the local people decide what was the best kind of cooperative organization for their purposes. They decided that membership should be compulsory for all family heads. In 1928 the cooperative acquired a threshing machine with [243] the funds obtained from the pasture land. This machine as well as newer ones were in use when I visited the village near the middle of June 1953. [293] Organized pandemonium seemed to reign as new loads of wheat sheaves [751]

governmental structure which tied together these separated local governments into any larger whole. Thus, as Greece moved toward modern nationhood, the type of local government which had existed under the Ottoman Empire began to wither. 175 623 642

One Athenian professor said to me that after ten years of revolution (1821–1830) the people wanted a king who could end anarchy and bring order. They had to accept a centralized government and put up with laws not natural to the country but which were necessary if Greece were to appear "civilized" enough to get loans from abroad. "We still need a legal system agreeing better with our country," he concluded. This is one reason, he thinks, why the peasant tries to get around the laws; he does not look upon them as his laws, as Greek laws. [671]

During the first forty years of this century, the greatest changes in community life occurred under Venizelos in 1912 and under Metaxas in 1935. Venizelos, for instance, refashioned the old demes, or local units consisting of several villages, and made each village a unit responsible for supporting many local services under a community council and president. The deme still had the taxing, police, and judicial powers. The central government attempted to supply teachers for communities, a step which meant much less local autonomy but which was essential if Greece were to have a uniform system of education. Many other activities which local governmental bodies had handled up to this time had to be approved by the nomarch (administrator of the nomos) and ministry. Even the Constitution of 1927, though leaving to local government matters managed directly by the citizens, left the definition of "local matters" so vague that the demes and communes were at the mercy of the legislators and ministries who, by law and decree, could "outline their powers, procedures, and revenues."[4] 631 642 [658]

Metaxas, after abrogating the Constitution of 1927, imposed on the total Greek population "modern" methods of hygiene, childrearing, and education. He even attempted to introduce early weaning and the use of bottles. In community affairs, local elections were abolished and local officials could be dismissed and replaced by the Minister of the Interior. [185]

Today, according to one authority:

> The local government units in Greece are demes and communes. There are 217 demes and 5,746 communes. Demes, under the 1912 law, were those units with 10,000 or more population; but recent amendments allowed so many exceptions that there are now 144 below this minimum standard. Communes are supposed to have 300 or more people and an elementary school; but this standard was also relaxed so that now there are many below this figure. As a matter of fact, half of the communes today have less than five hundred inhabitants.[5] [621] [633] [162]

Since such small population centers cannot support all of the expected services, some kind of amalgamation of units is thought desirable. But how

[XV]

The Village Community

A Greek village has a much richer social texture than the casual visitor would imagine. As already indicated, it has its patterns of mutual aid, its church, school, local government, and coffeehouses — which often are the focal points for intense activity — but it also has its neighborhoods, kinship groups, and even a status system according to which people are sorted out by other villagers. Furthermore, if any villager "gets out of line," strong social sanctions can be brought to bear to make him conform. The village notables whom I met enjoyed telling how things got done in their communities and of the factions and cross-pressures at work. Many times, simply by watching them perform their official and unofficial roles in behalf of the community, I observed the community in action. A mother came to ask how she could get her son out of the army long enough to help with the spring plowing because her husband was disabled with a back injury; an official from the Ministry of Agriculture left some forms about crop production for the secretary to fill out; a man who had received a letter in English from a nephew in the United States wanted one of the notables — who had previously been in the States — to translate the contents. The variety of tasks seemed endless, but some village notable was usually able to rise to the occasion. 621 ● [554] [626]

the economic level of doctors or large storekeepers. Now this factor has diminished considerably concerning tobacco producers and has also affected smaller storekeepers, allowing less chance for them to expand their enterprises.[4] 565 554

He concludes that the ends of the "social pyramid became closer and it is difficult to separate the second from the third class, while the upper class became smaller." Land ownership and money, two factors which were stressed before the war, are no longer very important, for a peasant can rent a field quite inexpensively. With the prices of tobacco as low as they are, land is not in as great demand. [423 427]

VILLAGE ORGANIZATIONS

Almost every village today has one or more clubs or associations which have been promoted by governmental officials and people from the city in an effort to effect some change in the rural way of life. Most of these organizations appear to be well intentioned and are accepted as such by the local people, but this does not mean that the peasants become eager joiners or loyal members. Other village groups have much deeper local roots: mutual-aid groups and the cooperatives; the church board, the school board, and the community council. In many villages I inquired about the formally organized groups. Three widely scattered communities listed a variety of associations, some of which will be described more fully below: 575 621 ● [369]

Ano Kleitoria (Peloponnesos): community council, church board, school board, and Friends of the Forest.

Kalivi (Attica): the regular boards, five cooperatives, agro club, hunting club, home-economics club.

Polygyros (Chalkidike, Macedonia): the regular boards, two cooperatives (agricultural, apiary), boy scouts, lawyers' union, athletic club, professional union, medical union, olive-oil union, woman's philanthropic group.

One widespread and rapidly growing organization is the Rural Youth Club, which is modeled on the 4-H Club in the United States and promoted and supervised by the Extension Service of the Greek Ministry of Agriculture. Each member carries out an agricultural project, and together they operate a field owned by the club. In the Macedonian village referred to they also operate the village library located in the community building. They meet once a week to listen to a lecture, which is followed by recreational activities. 575 654 [242]

The women, too, have their own club. It is the home club or home-economics club similar to the Home Demonstration Club in the United States. It includes farm and nonfarm women, young and old. When field work is slack, the members attend classes in canning, sewing, and cooking, several times a month. The home agent helps them acquire knowledge and skill through lectures, demonstrations, and group participation. Often the club has its own workship and kitchen.

575 For men, the cooperatives are the chief associations, although meetings
[474] are relatively infrequent since these are primarily service organizations. They have not yet really taken on the educational role displayed by the youth or women's groups.

At best, these organizations which have been described exist to satisfy the interests of the members who affiliate. Unlike the institutionalized church board, school board, and community council, they do not exist to serve community-wide needs even though many of their stated purposes might contain grandiose aims. Most of these are not organizations which the villagers themselves have created, but have been formed in response to outside pressures and have been founded in the hope that they will do something to help the villagers have a better life. What makes the promotion
575 of such organizations difficult is the utter lack on the part of the peasant
571 of an abstract loyalty to an organization; he goes if he wants to or if he likes the agent from outside — not because he feels it his duty as a member to support the group of which he is a part.

Even if the numbers of organizations in rural Greece were doubled and the membership quadrupled, it is hardly likely that the Greek peasant would think of the "organizational approach" to problem solving. Where some Americans might get together and form a group to deal with a problem, the Greek peasants would either say "let the central government do it" or, if they are more sophisticated, relegate it to the community council to worry about. There is no tie-in between individual responsibility and membership-in-action groups, such as one finds in suburban America; the peasant is in the preorganization stage, which perhaps indicates why his life seems so untrammeled to those who get to know him well.

THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY

● 621 Greek village life has a unity in the sense that the peasants see their life
182 as a whole and do not compartmentalize it in the way that it has been presented here. They make no distinction between religion and agriculture, family life and recreation, mutual aid and local government. Life flows on day by day, each day with its own tasks and joys, but marked by the variations which the seasons bring. Nor does the Greek villager distinguish in his mind among his village as a place or physical setting, his home, or the people who walk the streets. All these, to which we might also add the donkeys, goats, and other animals, possess a unity in that they fit together as a part of his accustomed world.

621 But Greek village life does not have a unity in the sense that there is
578 perfect agreement within the community on every course of action or in
665 the sense that people placidly sit by and concur in what a few self-appointed
669 leaders might choose to do. Factions arise, and many of them persist. These
182 can arise in time of war when rival armies visit the village in the search

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for enemy sympathizers, thus presenting a wonderful chance for the unscrupulous person to denounce a fellow villager with whom he wants to even an old score. In the choice of sides in the Communist-inspired guerrilla war, for example, definite factions came into existence and their lines have not been altogether obliterated today. 621 [578 665 669]

Despite factionalism and the lack of idyllic harmony, it is correct to say that most villagers feel a sense of community. It may seem entirely absent whenever people are trying to persuade the villagers to carry out community improvements from which they can see no immediate benefit, but it is there to be reckoned with whenever the reputation or the safety of the community is threatened. To try to explain the basis for this sense of community is to review much of what has already been said, but perhaps it can be understood in terms of four divergent strands: *philotimo,* or ultrasensitive self-esteem; a common living space; shared institutions; and an accepted system of social control.

Philotimo. Social phenomena in Greece must be seen first in terms of individuals, who in turn cannot be understood without recognizing the national trait of philotimo. Dorothy Lee has clearly explained this complex character trait: 156 828 577 182

> Everyone has his *philotimo,* as an individual, as a member of a family, and, most of all, as a Greek. On this rests Greek individualism, since it is sheer being which is respected, not position in the world or achievement. On this rests Greek democracy and equality, since everyone, both as a person and as a Greek, is equal to everyone else, neither superior nor inferior. . . . This does not mean that there is lacking a balance of roles or interpersonal structuring; but these relationships of interdependence, of leader and followers, of division of areas of responsibility and work are not cast in the mold of superiority and inferiority. Inferiority comes only with the forfeiting of the *philotimo.* . . . The inner core of the Greek must never be exposed; and *entrope,* the Greek word for shame, modesty, decency, propriety, self-consciousness, embarrassment, means: "turning inward." This is a concept both positive and negative: you have done something shameful only because you have failed in the positive aspect, in modesty and decency. Out of *entrope* a Greek avoids saying things and doing things which would reflect on the *philotimo* of himself, his family, his country. For example, the self-made man in Greece does not boast of his rags-to-riches progress. This would expose the poverty of his village, the inability of his family to help him, the fact that his uncle or his godfather could not or did not do his duty by him; it would expose much that should remain decently covered, and would further prove him to be lacking in *philotimo.*[8] [571]

Dr. Lee then goes on to explain that the essence of philotimo is inviolability and freedom and that the sense of inviolability makes a Greek extremely "touchy." An offended philotimo leads to retaliation, not self-reproach. She writes:

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> 156 To suggest to a Greek that he needs aid in raising his standard of living be-
> 828 cause his ways are backward is to violate his *philotimo* as a person and as a
> 577 Greek. There is need for aid now because of acts of God, not because of per-
> sonal failure or Greek inadequacy. . . .

●621 One may well ask how this trait of self-esteem is related to a sense of
156 community. The connection is twofold: first, the adult member of the
577 community participates as a free agent and as an expression of his own
182 individuality; he can cooperate because he feels free, and by the same token
he can refuse to cooperate. But the second connection makes him think seriously before refusing to cooperate, for he would be shaming himself and others if he let his village down. Yet the sense of community need not be limited to formal cooperation; it can be a state of mind as well, a feeling of loyalty one carries about, and a deep psychological identification with the village where one was born and in which one grew up.

621 *A common living space.* One writer attributes the unity of the Greek
182 village to the residents' dependence upon their physical environment:

> First, the people are directly dependent on the land, hence their interests are
> [423] all one. Second, the village owns grazing lands and meadows used in common
> by the farmers. Third, the people are highly interdependent in respect to water supply. Thus a sense of cooperation pervades the village. Fourth, the people of the village are limited in their actions by the very village's physical structure; the width of the streets, the pavement or lack of pavements, and degree of crookedness of same. Lastly, the whole physical lay-out is such that ceremonials and rituals as repeated year-in and year-out by slow processions, must change even if the ceremonials were to become mechanized.*

An earlier chapter on the village setting has discussed this factor, which must be taken into account in considering the identification people feel with their village. People develop a "sense of belonging" with those who walk the same village lanes, send their animals to the same community pastures, draw water from the same wells or fountains, and share the same living space. This propinquity does not necessarily produce a liking for everyone frequently encountered, but it calls for the recognition that these neighbors or fellow villagers must be dealt with in solving many of the ordinary affairs of life.

Shared institutions. Partly related to the physical pattern of the village are the church, the school, and the office of the local government, whose very structures are visible and concrete signs of the institutional complex which they embody. But these institutions are more than a material expression; they are also the focal points of the values which the people inherit and pass on to their children. On the basis of these, people ascribe rank to each other; on the basis of these, people make decisions relative to what activities are most worthy and which are least worthy. Community

621 182 life, as well as individual life, has its evaluative mechanisms which are brought into play in problem solving. The local institutions, described so fully in previous chapters, either have certain kinds of problems which they are supposed to treat, or the institutional leaders are sometimes called in to help deal with situations too grave for any single institution to handle. Again, the sense of community which a Greek villager develops is based in part not only upon sharing with others the activities which these institutions perpetuate, but also in knowing that he and his family are dependent upon them for meeting many of life's basic needs and aspirations.

575 621 182 The introduction of formal organizations into the Greek village, although they may accomplish certain specific goals, can also have the net effect of introducing new cleavages. The local institutions as described have been inclusive in that almost everyone in the village who wanted to could participate in them, with some allowances made for sex and age differences. But organizations bring in the idea of members and nonmembers. Some belong; others do not. Where membership is interpreted as signifying that the member is superior to or better than the nonmember, it causes resentment within that village where organizations are relatively new and not much appreciated. This may even run counter to the local value system. Yet experience in other societies, and even in the urban sectors of Greek society, has shown that economic development — which many peasants ardently desire — is based on specialization. This, in turn, is promoted by organizations which encourage and sustain this specialization. Society, even in the village, becomes more heterogeneous as the level of living rises, as the number of alternative choices (occupational, recreational, and such) increase, and as greater reliance is placed upon the individual.

Therefore, in understanding the traditional sense of community one must see the countervailing tendency to organize along specialized lines and to promote individual rather than community interests. In an industrialized society this means that a new kind of solidarity, based on functional interdependence, replaces that solidarity based on homogeneity and a common view of world and work.[7] Very often in the shift from the traditional to the more complex type, individuals and communities experience disorganization which, in time, leads to a reorganization better adapted to new needs. Closely related to the degree and type of disorganization is the system of social control and how it operates.

577 626 *Social control*. In Greece, as elsewhere, the most effective social controls are built into the personality structure of a person as he grows up. He learns what his society considers to be morally right and wrong and, if "well brought up," does not question these standards and, more often than not, abides by them; he also learns what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior at given times and places; he knows, too, that in a particular situation some people (say, the oldest men present) behave differently from

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The people speak against the person.

If a woman gossips, people ignore her.

If a man drinks too much, they beat him.

People give advice, for there are usually two or three older people who have the role of advisers and to whom people turn.

Sometimes the solution is by means of knives.

The village people threaten the person who does not conform and may drive him out of the village.

They may take the person to church and make him say special prayers.

They may take revenge on the person by injuring his animals, or by burning his house if his conduct is too much of a threat to the rest.

This last item illustrates that at times the people can behave cruelly to other villagers who threaten the safety, morality, or even reputation of the village. Individuals as individuals seek personal revenge, but much of the time such an action is collective, discussed by several leaders in advance, and carried out with dispatch by a group. [627]

Apparently, living in a Greek village is a great deal like living in a goldfish bowl. One writer comments of his village:

> Here in our village one has no secrets from the others. Someone asks about something and we reply. Even if we want to hide something we cannot. Everybody knows about it. . . . We say: "The whole world announces it with drums, while we think it's a secret." [9]

But the sense of community grows not only out of the acceptance of the same "thou shalt nots" but also is related to the systems of rewards held out by the community to those who conform. This is the positive side of social control. To have the esteem of the villagers is to enhance one's own self-esteem, to win an election because others think well of you, to be sought out when others need advice, to have your sons or daughters considered as good "catches" for marriage, all indicate that one has conformed to the code of accepted behavior. It may also mean that one has used individual initiative in behalf of the community when situations arose for which the code gave no specific prescription.

One villager summarized the sense of community well when he pointed out that people were loyal to their village because they lived there and their interests were connected with it, adding, "one is loyal to whatever is close to one's birth certificate and death certificate." 621●

Although the life of the villager centers in most details upon the settlement where he lives, his range of interests may go far beyond it. True enough, he is apt to be loyal to his village; but he is also loyal to his region. Those who come from Arcadia, whether they are residing in Athens or in 619 [575]

Whereas the effect of the coming of the Asia Minor refugees was to in- 178
crease the population and heighten the economic activity of the country, the 369
effect of the stay of these northern villagers in town was to loosen somewhat 727
the social cement that holds the kinship group and the village community to- 669
gether. It set in motion more perceptibly in Northern Greece what has long [621]
been characteristic of Central Greece and the Peloponnesos: the urbaniza-
tion of the countryside, in the sense of the spreading influence of urban
ways.

War is not the only source of cataclysmic change. Devastating earthquakes 178
sometimes destroy densely populated areas. In 1953, shortly after we left 731
Greece, earthquakes created havoc on the islands of Cephalonia and Zante. [133]
My former interpreter, Bessie Adossides, described this in a revealing letter:

> As soon as these earthquakes started, Mother and I presented ourselves to the Greek Red Cross and volunteered to go either to Cephalonia or Zante. Thus on August 13th we left via Patras for Zante. Mother was heading a group of eighteen volunteer nurses and, when we arrived at our destination, the whole town was still in flames and the place smelled of burned flesh. The disaster in the town of Zante was complete; only one church, a school, and a bank were standing. The panic, suffering, and agony of the population were indescribable. We found on our arrival that nurses from Patras had set up a provisionary tent hospital, but as there was not sufficient place for all the wounded and sick, these were being shipped to Patras. For two nights we stayed awake as the fire came very near the hospital and we had to be ready to carry everybody on board a ship in the harbor. Luckily this did not happen.

Although this letter describes the efforts of a few individuals, the whole 178
Greek nation was asked to contribute to the reconstruction of these de- 731
stroyed island communities. International agencies also helped. Such a 659
catastrophic experience, with its rupturing of some social bonds and the
forging of new ones, has brought about social changes in the areas affected.
The economic drain resulted in readjustment of the government's plans for
economic development, since substantial material resources had to be routed
to this area of dire need. A few years before, the city of Volos in Thessaly
had been badly affected; earlier it had been Corinth.

No matter what type of cataclysm occurs, when governmental authorities have to step in and assist in reconstruction, there is always the tendency — as expressed by one nomarch — for people to take "distribution of clothing, food, and medical care for granted, hoping it will go on forever." The fact that they have suffered entitles them, so they think, to continued support even after reconstruction days are past.

SOCIAL DRIFT

Even in a country as subjected to catastrophe as Greece, individuals de- 178
cide whether or not to try new ways which they have seen or about which

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The Village: As a Setting

THE VILLAGE OF VASILIKA lies almost at the foot of Mt. Parnassos on the Boeotian plain. The oldest of its fifty-odd houses were built in the late nineteenth century by the grandfathers of some of the now adult villagers. Most of them came from the village of Parori two miles to the northeast. Until 1933, when Vasilika sued for and won separate status, the two settlements were classified by the central government as one community (*kinotis*). The parent village still has the larger population, with some 700 inhabitants, while Vasilika, in 1955–1956, had 216. 361 621 [166] [162]

Both Vasilika and Parori have come to be called by these names only since 1955. During the Turkish occupation, and for more than a century after the liberation of the region, the Boeotian villages used the names the Turks had assigned to them. Parori was Biskeni Aghas; Vasilika was Kravasaras. But in the last decade, patriotic considerations have led to a change from the old names to ones based on Greek roots. *Parori,* in Greek, means "near a mountain" and is an appropriate name for a village which rests in the foothills of Parnassos. *Vasilika* means "royal" and was the name of a hill in the region where a famous battle against the Turks was fought. In some cases, the names by which the villages were known in classical Greek times were restored. Drachmani, for example, once again became Elatia. 621 103 186

Most of the villagers of Vasilika, in 1961, still called the village "Kravasaras." Indeed, the new sign pointing to the dirt road which leads into the settlement reads *Kravasaras,* in spite of the designation of the village in the provincial records as *Vasilika.* This type of double nomenclature is common in the entire region. The wives of Vasilika, most of whom come from the surrounding Boeotian villages, frequently refer to their former houses by their older Turkish names. These are the names which evoke for them the emotions associated with "my village." Their husbands, on the other hand, often refer to their wives' home villages by the newly given names. An outsider must resign himself to learning the double nomenclature if he is to avoid utter confusion.

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Vasilika

The Area Surrounding Vasilika

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The inhabitants of Vasilika, as the village will henceforth be called, are
[621] farmers and shepherds. The farmers cultivate the land in the plains adjacent to
[361] the low-lying ridge on which most of the houses are built. As a consequence of
[423] the dowry and inheritance system in the region, some of the fields near Vasilika
are owned by farm families in neighboring villages, and the Vasilika farmers
own some lands in other sections of the Boeotian plain and even in the surrounding foothills. By and large, however, the inhabitants cultivate lands of the
[133] quality characteristic of the Boeotian plains. These lie in East Central Greece,
north and west of the smaller plains of Attica. The flat land of Boeotia is one of
[134] Greece's few regions of moist, fertile soil. The Kiphisus river once flowed
through the whole area, but earth movements and the porous limestone of the
region, which permits underground drainage, have broken the continuity of the
river's flow. The upper stream flows through a narrow mountain-bordered valley
and then into a wide plain which was once covered by Lake Copais. The river is
silt-laden, and the underground channels through which the water escapes tend
to get blocked up. The land can not always absorb the waters of the winter
rainy season as rapidly as they accumulate. Thus an especially wet winter can
flood the fields so badly that they do not drain off in time for spring planting
[312] (Newbigin 1949:333). A system of controlling the waters exists for the land
reclaimed by draining Lake Copais. However, the cultivated fields of Vasilika
lie some miles past this region, and although the Kiphisus flows through their
fields, the farmers have no method of draining off excess water. Consequently,
[134] they watch the winter rains with some apprehension. On the other hand, the
regular winter flooding in ordinary years, along with the accumulation of alluvium enriched by humus, makes the soil suitable for two crops of wheat annually
and for summer crops such as cotton and tobacco (Newbigin 1949:333).

Since the growing season for these last two crops is a dry one, the cotton
241 always requires irrigation and the tobacco sometimes does. The natural under-
312 ground drainage system makes it possible to drill good wells almost anywhere
[406] in the fields, from which water may be drawn by diesel irrigation pumps. Many
such wells have been dug and are serving Vasilika's farmers. Within the village
itself there are nine wells in regular use. Only an unusually dry year brings any
danger of serious water shortage for either ordinary household purposes or for
[363] irrigation. The mulberry trees which line the main village street and the occasional trees which appear here and there among the houses flourish because of
the good water table and, in spring and summer, provide a pleasing contrast of
dark green to the predominantly brown and orange tones of the village's land
and houses.

49 The people of Vasilika, like those on the other plains of Greece, not
621 only have the advantage of larger tracts of more fertile soil but also are consider-
361 ably less isolated than the inhabitants of the mountain villages. As will be seen,
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the easy access to roads and transportation to and from the village has important consequences for its culture and social structure.

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The Boeotian plain is bounded by mountain systems and the sea. Running west and north, the Parnis, Kithaeron, and Helicon ranges as well as Parnassos itself separate it from the plains of Attica. The town of Lamia on the small Sperchios plain to the north and the west can be reached only by traversing parts of the Kallidromon and Ghiona mountains. To the east, an extension of the Kallidromon range makes access to the Gulf of Atalanti difficult. But the most important road which runs over and around the mountains and through the plains from Athens to Thessalonika has been paved throughout its length since World War II. It is now a two-lane asphalt highway which serves as a truck and bus route of major importance in the communications system of the country. In most of Boeotia, the highway runs more or less parallel with and not far from the tracks of the Athens-to-Thessalonika railroad.

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The village of Vasilika lies on the slope of a low ridge just a half mile off this main highway. Since the summer of 1956, a local bus comes through the main street of the village twice a day, at 6:00 in the morning and at noon.

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Going in the direction of Athens, ninety miles distant, the bus passes a British Petroleum (BP) station and restaurant a mile and a half down the road and traverses several villages. Its destination, however, is usually Levadhia, fifteen miles from Vasilika. Levadhia is the provincial capital and marketing center of some 12,000 population. Here bus connections to Athens may be made.

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In the opposite direction, the nearest village of some size and importance is Kifisokhori. It lies five miles up the road from Vasilika. Kifisokhori has, among other facilities not available in Vasilika, flour mills, large grocery stores, barbers, doctors, a pharmacy, a movie, and several taxis. Whether they use the bus or load their horses with flour for the mill and walk by way of the shortcut through the fields, the people of Vasilika go most frequently to Kifisokhori.

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Further north and off to the west, but only about eight miles past Kifisokhori, is Amphiklia. This town is the seat for tax collections and other governmental financial matters for the fiscal district in which Vasilika is situated. On the 16th of each month, for example, the priests of the village within Amphiklia's jurisdiction gather in the town to collect government salaries. Amphiklia also has a coeducational gymnasium (the approximate equivalent of an American high school and junior college combined). Several boys and girls from Vasilika live in that town to attend the school.

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The people of Vasilika can also travel in the direction of the sea. The dirt road which starts at the highway leads to the houses of the village, then becomes the main street, and finally extends beyond the settlement between the borders of the fields and the foot of the ridge on which the village is situated. Never free of ruts, of dust, and in the winter, of mud, the road narrows and deteriorates further as it passes the last village house. Nevertheless, pedestrians, donkeys, horses, tractors, and even, with some difficulty, trucks and buses can get through. Half a mile past the last village house, at the banks of the Kiphisus, this road meets the road to Atalanti. Buses from Levadhia that have turned off

49 onto the Atalanti road at the BP station will stop here if there are any passengers.

484 The asphalt and dirt roads are not the only routes by which the village can be approached. The local railroad station of Helikon is just a mile up the highway going toward Kifisokhori. Trains from Athens stop at Helikon at least once a day. The train can also be used to reach Kifisokhori. Thus, a resident of Vasilika can reach any of the main towns of eastern Greece with relative ease and at no great expense, even from the standpoint of his own standard of living.

438 443 484 The same transportation routes which enable the villagers to leave their homes also enable people and products to enter the village. Itinerant vendors of fresh fish, oranges, tomatoes, ice cream, cloth, crockery, sacred pictures, and the like reach Vasilika over these roads. Tinsmiths, blacksmiths, and cobblers use them to come to set up shop for a day or two near one of the coffee houses. The same roads bring gypsies who occasionally pass through the village to beg and to entertain. On the many occasions when family gatherings are in order, the town relatives of the villagers can reach Vasilika with ease.

487 This description has so far primarily concerned itself with Vasilika's
accessibility to town or city centers of commerce, government, and recreation.
484 But there are also paths through the fields and into and over the surrounding
hills that lead to the neighboring villages. One can still walk or ride a horse or
49 a donkey to reach these settlements. For the women of Vasilika, these are the
important routes. By following them, they can reach the homes of their parents
and their daughters, attend the engagements, weddings, and saint's day celebrations in their home villages, and perhaps help out when a daughter has a child.
These same paths bring the relatives of Vasilika's women into the village on
similar occasions. From the standpoint of the rural economy, this network of
[205] paths permits the movement of farm laborers among the villages. Indeed, it is
in this way that the postman walks from village to village carrying the mail.

● 621 484 The stress on the many avenues of contact with other people and communities available to Vasilika's population should not lead one to imagine a bustling, busy center with a constant ebb and flow of traffic. The exact nature of movement in and around the village can be better understood if the spatial arrangement of Vasilika's buildings is known. Social relations among the villagers are also affected by these arrangements.

Inside Vasilika

361 [49] The ridge, on the lowest slopes of which most of the structures are built,
lies, as I have said, a half mile from the main highway and somewhat parallel to
it. The highway runs from northwest to southeast, Vasilika's ridge from northwest to east. To reach the first village structure, one walks north about three-
[346] tenths of a mile on a dirt road leading from the highway. Vineyards and fields
are on the right; to the left stands the new one-room schoolhouse built in 1959,
[245] with its play yard and surrounding wire fence. A stand of young pines and another of young cypresses, newly planted by the school children, adjoined the
[764] schoolhouse in 1961. On the road, past the schoolhouse, a little further to the

361 church of St. Cosmas and St. Damian, therefore, Vasilika's public buildings and
its two commercial establishments are concentrated toward the end of the village
that is closest to the turnoff from the highway.

621 The part of the village street which is between the two coffeehouses is
[361] called the *aghora* (market place), and it is here that the public life of the village
is carried on. The bus stops at the *aghora*. Most of the itinerant peddlers stand
[443] there and loudly shout their wares. Government officials sit in one or the other
of the coffeehouses to conduct business with the villagers. At the end of a day's
work in the fields and throughout much of every day in the winter, Vasilika's
[527] men sit in the coffeehouses to talk, occasionally to play cards, and, incidentally, to
drink coffee or, in the summer, soft drinks. On feast days and holidays musicians
[533] come to the *aghora*, and the villagers, their guests, and people from the neighboring
[535] settlements gather to listen to the music, and to take turns at dancing and at
watching the dancers. For the most part, however, the world of the *aghora*, and,
621 indeed, the public world of the village, is a male world penetrated sporadically
562 by children of both sexes. Business with government officials or with artisans is
conducted by the men. Men do the marketing from the peddlers of fresh foods,
437 and buy whatever items are needed from the village stores. Little girls up to
the age of twelve or fourteen, alone or with their brothers, may be sent to the
aghora on errands, but older girls and women will venture into the area only to
pass through it on their way to church or to the fields. I have seen a young
mother from the eastern end of the village, when she heard the calls of a tomato
vendor, walk to the edge of the *aghora* area. She stood some two hundred feet
from the tomato wagon, shouted to the peddler to ask what his prices were, and
then waited in the same spot until she could send a passing child to buy her
tomatoes for her.

594 The private world of the villagers, which is more significant than the
public one both from their own point of view and from that of the outside
observer of the culture and social structure of the region, is concentrated in and
[423] around the homes. With a few exceptions to be noted later, each of Vasilika's
married men owns the house in which he lives with his wife and children. The
342 structural type and size of the houses and the arrangement of each family's compound
of buildings varies partly with the age of the buildings and partly with
the income level of the owners. The large older houses are two-story rectangular
stone buildings with an outside staircase leading to the terrace of the second
story. There is no way of reaching the upper rooms from the inside of the house.
[178] The terrace, with wooden plank flooring if there has been no recent renovation,
and of cement, if there has been, is a constant feature of the two-story houses.
The roofs are peaked and covered with red tiles. Stones are used to keep loose
tiles in place. Large two-story houses built since the end of World War II are
constructed on the same pattern, but with flat terrazzo roofs. Most of these are
still constructed of the local stone. A second type of older house is smaller in
area, has only one floor, and is built either of the prevailing stone or of white-
[343] washed stucco covering a brick frame. Some of these structures have no windows,
and when this is the case, they are more frequently than not used as combined
storage houses and barns. However, several of Vasilika's families live in such

361 houses directly on the village street are fairly close to it, so that the protrusion of one wall obscures the view from the roadside entrance of the next house. Four of the substantial village households along the main street have high enclosing walls on the street side.

621 Either by inadvertence or by design, such an orientation of buildings
has certain consequences. It successfully limits the ability of the members of any
156 village household to see directly just what is happening in more than two or
three neighboring households. Except for such immediate neighbors, people may
have to make a deliberate effort to find out what is going on in other sections
of the village. And the signs may not be easy to interpret. The smoke rising
from an oven down the hill indicates that the oven is in use. But it may be the
owner who is using it, or some other woman who may have borrowed it to bake
her bread. Or perhaps she is baking a *pita* (a kind of pie). Who knows? Besides, much of the movement of people to and from their homes has to do with
what, from the villagers' point of view, are family affairs. Trips connected with
[594] the possible sale of tobacco, with the purchase of finery for a festival, with the
preliminaries involved in arranging marriages, or with the supervision of any
property owned elsewhere, are considered private family business. One therefore
[484] does not make a public show of setting out to attend to such affairs. People will
make all preparations inside the house and leave just in time to catch a bus. If
most people are indoors or in the fields that day, a departure may not be noted
until the evening discussions in the coffeehouse. Or perhaps not even then, since
few men follow a regular pattern of coffeehouse attendance.

The point here is not that the people of Vasilika cannot and do not learn about the activities of the other villagers, but that the acquisition of such information comes with some conscious effort and often with some difficulty. Once obtained it is highly prized. One gets the impression that about some matters, at least, everyone is playing a perpetual game of hide and seek. Each family does its best to keep certain aspects of its own affairs from leaking out and every other family does its best to uncover the secrets. Each group succeeds somewhat in its purpose and the taste even of limited accomplishment serves to keep the game going. The placement and character of the buildings in Vasilika contribute to the intriguing quality of the process.

Movement in and through the Village

621 To return to the general question of the pattern of traffic and movement
484 in Vasilika: The public focus of the village is at the western end of the settlement, and remains on the level plain. Many visitors to the village, therefore,
494 never travel further, either out east or up the hill, than the *aghora*. But some
trucks, tractors, horses, mules, donkeys, wagons, and even occasional taxies are
driven through the entire settlement on their way to and from the fields near
the river. The villagers themselves contribute much of this kind of traffic in the
[512] spring, summer, and early fall when they go daily to the fields and transport

equipment and produce on their animals or, as two families do, on tractors. 621
They are joined by farmers from neighboring villages whose fields lie adjacent 484
to Vasilika and who travel through the village to reach them. Trucks come to
pick up cotton, tobacco, wheat for the mill, and the like and, therefore, are seen 494
more frequently whenever the various crops are being harvested. In any case, 512
whenever there is movement along the entire length of the settlement, it occurs
most densely in the early morning just after dawn and in the early evening just
before sundown. As the labor of the day starts, in addition to the other traffic, 233
someone from each of the households in which sheep and goats are owned leads
the animals up the hill to the shepherds who will watch over them during the 484
day. In the evening, the sheep are brought back again, but the goats often find 512
their way home without any help. A first encounter with a lone goat coming 621
around the corner of a village house, as it suddenly appears in the violet light
of early dusk, is a startling experience. The soft light at the beginning and the
end of these days is associated with the delicate tinkle of the sheep and goat
bells as the animals move around the village. The entire ebb and flow of movement
diminishes to an irregular trickle during the Mediterranean winter months
from November to January when people stay in the village proper for most of
the day.

Vasilika's shepherds and their families also participate in the main patterns
of movement, except that the shepherds continue to go out daily through
the winter and may leave the village entirely for the summer months.

But traffic in Vasilika is rarely a mass movement. Rather, there is always 484
a range of time within which the villagers consider it feasible to carry out any
activity. Each family moves at its own pace within the range. Even during the 512
busy agricultural seasons, watching from the vantage point of a terrace facing a 241
part of the main street at the east side of the *aghora,* one sees, first, a man going 805
by in the direction of the river, leading a horse which carries a cultivator in its
saddle; for ten minutes no one goes by, then a young man passes in the same
direction; for five minutes nothing, then a woman and her grown daughter go
past in the other direction carrying hoes for work in the cotton fields. A few [492]
minutes later, two young brothers go by, one leading and the other riding a
horse sidesaddle; and so it goes until there is a longer period with virtually no
movement at all. What is more, each day, even in the same season, the people
involved in the movement will vary. The man who was first to go out morning
may leave a half-hour later the next; a girl who did the washing at home
one day, and so did not appear at all, will be seen going out to the fields on the
following morning. Such variation in activities both as regards the time when [221]
each of the village families starts on any project, and also with respect to the
timing of activities from day to day by the members of any one household, appears
again in the seasonal shifts of activities. The first major agricultural task 245
in early spring is the pruning of the grape vines. For a period of several weeks 221
almost every man who passes by is carrying a pruning hook. But here too, families
start and end their pruning on different days. Only the comments on the
situation are uniform. Each man complains of his blistered hands and aching

245 back, remarks that pruning is especially hard work because it is the first job in
221 spring after the winter's rest, and usually finishes by saying, "What can we do?
Wine is good, but it takes hard work."

484 The movement of people in and out of Vasilika is not dependent on the
agricultural cycle alone. I have already mentioned the visits of vendors, traders,
574 and government officials to the village. Each saint's day brings some visitors to
527 Vasilika, for the men and boys of the village celebrate the birthday of the saint
[553] after whom they were named, and not their own birthdays. On St. George's Day,
for example, relatives who live in surrounding villages come to visit the George
in Vasilika who is kin to them. The number of the visitors on these days is thus
directly related to the number of men and boys in the village who have been
baptized with the name of the saint being honored. On St. John's Day, St.
George's Day, and St. Constantine's Day, for example, there are many visitors
to Vasilika. There is no one named Spiros or Petros in the village, so that St.
Spiridon's Day and St. Peter's Day bring no visitors at all.

484 The periods of greatest density of population in the village are the two
or three days of *paniyiri* (the patron saints' day festival), when relatives and
574 strangers by the hundreds come to the village for the festivities, and Christmas
796 and Easter, when those who formerly lived in Vasilika return to their *patridha*
for a few days. Vasilika is least fully populated in midsummer when individuals
and families attend the *paniyiria* of other villages in the region. They usually
choose those villages in which they have relatives, and stay for a few days. At
[361] this season, also, some families go to watering places for a week or two, or
camp on Parnassos to avoid the heat of Vasilika.

481 The arhythmic quality of the movement of people, animals, and vehicles
through the village has been described. It now remains to say that the pace of
[484] movement is always slow even when it is most purposeful. No one strides briskly
along the road or paths of the village; only children are ever seen running. The
pace seems to be set by the slow walk of a loaded horse or mule or donkey. The
villagers take the long leisurely strides they need to accompany these pack animals,
whenever they go from place to place, even when they walk without them.
[461] Slow action is characteristic also of the performance of any task. No one is ever
in a hurry. Women cook and serve with efficiency but without speed; men load a
horse equally efficiently but again without speed. Their movements are controlled,
and the exercise of that control gives an impression of vitality, of a
tenseness which makes the slowness a sign of power and deliberation, never of
lassitude or indifference.

● 621 When a visitor returns to Vasilika, he may ask, *"Ti nea?"* "What's
new?" He often receives the quasi-rhyming response *"Isichia,"* "All quiet." The
178 response means "The round of life is going on as usual. Besides, nothing much
[576] ever happens in this place, anyway." And in some sense, the villagers actually
believe what they say. The village is the physical center of the lives of the inhabitants;
in spite of their trips out of it, and the coming of visitors to the
village, the people of Vasilika see and talk to their fellow villagers more frequently
than they see and talk to nonvillagers. They even express considerable
satisfaction with some of the obvious village-wide changes of the last few years

such as electrification and the provision of a reservoir for water to be piped to the houses. But the village is neither the moral center of the life of the villagers, nor is it, as an entity in its own right, one of their dominant interests. 621 178

Starting an ethnography with a chapter called "The Setting" is a common practice among anthropological writers. By implication, what will follow is a kind of play for which the "setting" provides the scene. Such a beginning is particularly appropriate to Vasilika, because the village has, for its inhabitants, as well as for the observer, some of the quality of a stage-set. The people of Vasilika seem to think of their fellow villagers as acting the role of the chorus in ancient Greek drama (it is the chorus which comments on the action). The main action of the "play" in the village lies in the life of the family. We have heard villagers exclaim in connection with some intense family situation, *"Ti dhrama!"* "What a tragedy!" 621 594

From an anthropological point of view, the family in Vasilika is significant not only as the focus of interest for the villagers, but also as a separable unit of the social structure of the settlement. In cultural terms, the patterns in which families participate as a unit form a large part of the culture of the entire community. The next three chapters are therefore devoted to the activities of the village families.

parents have carefully prepared for them, is a form of pleasure so well recognized 593
that there is a specific verb to express it: *kamarono*.

The economic activities of the family through which its members actually 162
carry out a large part of their obligations are usually conducted by an entire
household. A household in Vasilika, however, is neither limited to nor does it 592
always include a husband and wife and their children, that is, a family. This is a result of the operation of the marriage, dowry, and inheritance system in the region (to be discussed fully in Chapter 4), and of unpredictable specific circumstances. Here it is sufficient to say that in 1961, of Vasilika's fifty-one households, twenty-six were composed of the elementary family; eight, in addition to the parents and their children, included the widowed mother of the husband; seven had a husband and a wife living alone; and three included one married son and his wife and children living in the same house with his father and mother and unmarried brothers and sisters. Of the remaining seven households, each had its own unique composition because of recent deaths in the family or other special circumstances. Whatever the particular situation, however, no Vasilika household includes anyone who is not a kinsman, nor indeed any adults outside the kinship range of parents, their grown children, or adult brothers and sisters.

Of the fifty-one households in Vasilika, thirty-five are headed by farmers 621 ●
who own some land. Although, for various reasons, these farmers are not all 592
equally dependent on their land holdings for their total subsistence and income, 241
their round of life as independent working farmers is one important expression
of the aims and obligations of their families. The yearly round of agricultural 434
activities is devoted principally to the production of grapes for wine, wheat for
bread, and cotton and tobacco for cash. The farming households also engage in 433
subsidiary activities which contribute to the production and processing of the main crops, and which add to the food supply and income of the households.

Major Crops

The first event of the agricultural year is the pruning of the grape vines. 245
Since grapes are not a commercial crop, each farmer devotes only one or two 221
stremata (four *stremata* equal one acre) to viticulture. Wine is made and con- 804
sumed at home, and each farmer aims to produce only enough grapes to keep him
in wine for a year. Pruning of the grape vines starts after the winter rains have 273
abated and the early spring sun appears. Only two or three "eyes" are left on a 372
vine, and the cuttings are carried back to the storehouses to be saved for use as
fuel for spit-barbecuing the Easter lambs. Again, as we have seen, farmers are 252
particularly conscious of fatigue in the course of the three or four days it usually
takes to do the pruning. Palms have softened over the winter, the wooden handle 147
of the pruning hook raises blisters, and the unaccustomed stooping and pulling 461
motions cause backaches. After the pruning, deep hoeing is done to pile the 412
earth around the short, stout vines. The work is done with a long-handled heavy
hoe and, in Vasilika, is considered man's work, as is the pruning. Since the two 462

243 at a cost of eight percent of the amount of the wheat threshed. This machine
427 leaves the straw in suitable condition for a baler which is hired next to press the
straw into bales for food for the horses, mules, and donkeys.

[231] The harvesting machinery is privately owned by entrepreneurs in the
[471] towns. Simple threshers have been known and used on the Boeotian plain for a
generation at least. The combine has appeared only since World War II and
[407] the hay baler only since the early 1950's. What accounts for the increasing willingness of the farmers to pay for machine operations on their wheat crop? Un-
[241] questionably, the growing efficiency of cotton production and the success of
[433] cotton and tobacco as cash crops enable the farmers to concentrate their labor
and attention on cotton and tobacco production and to let the growing cash value
[242] of the crops make up for the loss of a certain percentage of the wheat crop. However, chemical fertilizers and weed killers have increased the wheat yields, and
since payment for machine harvesting is in kind and not in cash, the entire
transaction can be managed at what to the farmers is a minimal cost.

243 A household uses its own wheat for making its bread, and bread is still
437 literally the staff of life, the basic food for the people of the village. Wheat is
also used for a kind of cereal called *trakhana* and for egg noodles. It is given as
[262] payment to the shepherds, whose wives turn the wheat income into their families'
bread supply. It continues to be used as an alternative medium of exchange for
[438] fish, olive oil, olives, coffee, and other household necessities not locally produced.
[231] As we have seen, the wheat straw is useful for the care of animals, and finally,
in an emergency, some wheat can always be sold for cash.

246 A typical farmer of Vasilika reserves four or five *stremata* of his land
231 for oats, barley, and clover. These furnish food for the pack animals not only
during the winter, but also in the early summer when the animals are permitted
to graze in the oat and clover fields as the crops mature. A small corner of a
244 grain field may be used for lentils and beans, which add to the household's food
262 supply.

248 The crops which most interest the farmers of Vasilika today are cotton
and tobacco. Because of the dry summers in Boeotia cotton production in the
312 region depends on irrigation. The high water-table makes well-pump irrigation
406 feasible. This system is also suited to the patterns of the rural social structure
[249] since it requires no centralized control or authority—each farmer household can
dig its own well and work its own pump for its own fields. Any man who has
[621] not yet purchased a pump can hire the use of one owned by a farmer with
[427] adjacent fields.

Cotton became a significant cash crop for Vasilika around 1936 when
one of the farmers who had heard about horse-driven well-pumps set one up
for himself and the other farmers soon followed suit. Since World War II,
[652] British-manufactured diesel pumps bought on the installment plan with credit
extended from the Agricultural Bank have replaced the horse-drawn equipment.
[427] Diesel pumps, like the tractors, may be rented by the day and the renter pays
for fuel also. The market for the use of the pump goes beyond the village itself

Specialization of Labor

233 563 166 463 434 Sheepherding as a specialty is relatively new to the village. Eight of Vasilika's ten shepherds and the members of their households are called *Vlachi* by the villagers. Most of these people come from Agrafa, in Euritania, in the northwestern part of the Greek mainland. Their fathers and grandfathers were shepherds, and the present group in Vasilika is the first generation ever to have settled anywhere with the intention and reasonable hope of staying. They augment the income from their own flocks by caring for those of the farmers as well.

233 563 511 434 464 262 342 From the point of view of the *Vlach* shepherd households headed by men (two are headed by widows), the settlement in Vasilika is a satisfactory change in their circumstances. In the years between 1950 and 1956, they had succeeded in building up their own flocks to the point where the sale of sheep, milk, and wool enabled them to have a small cash income to add to the money their women earned as hired agricultural labor. With a cash income, their diet no longer needed to be restricted largely to bread and cheese. The houses of the shepherds have improved since 1956. By 1961, all the shepherds' families were in houses instead of reed huts, and two of them were living in their own newly built one-room brick houses.

233 563 621 555 871 641 435 Perhaps most important to the shepherds' sense of well-being is that they have been admitted to citizenship in the *kinotis* of Vasilika, and that their children are receiving an education. The adult men had had to teach themselves and their children just enough reading and writing to be able to keep track of their commercial transactions through the year. Indeed, one shepherd, when asked what he thought about when he was out alone with his sheep, replied that he spent most of the time calculating how many sheep and how much milk to sell under the different possible price conditions of the coming season. What pleases the shepherds in Vasilika is that their children will have, as a result of a more formal education, some opportunities to follow a calling other than that of shepherd. In 1961, one of the shepherd's sons had already successfully completed a year at the gymnasium. Some of their daughters have married into the farm families of Vasilika, and even if these farmers are among the less prosperous in the village, such a marriage conveys prestige on the girl and her family in the eyes of the shepherd community.

233 563 571 621 Finally, the shepherds are grateful for the fact that several of them are settled in the same village and that it is possible for them sometimes to herd their flocks together. They are less lonely—they have company (*parea*)—and to have companions to talk to is considered a basic good by all the people of Vasilika.

463 445 In the first chapter, the movement of itinerant traders, vendors, artisans, and professionals into Vasilika was mentioned. The village has no resident carpenters, stonemasons, saddle-makers, barbers, tailors, or doctors; but the very existence of such specialists and the expectation that they will come from time to time, demonstrate an important characteristic of the household economy of

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369 428 511

land directly supports boys who live in towns both during their years in school and until they find a job. The possible importance of this for the urban economy of Greece will be discussed again in connection with dower wealth that is transferred to the cities.

Dowering the Daughter

182 583 [584] 582 [591]

The dowry shall be discussed first as the social mechanism by which daughters inherit property at marriage, and second as a mechanism for social mobility. In Vasilika, parents are obligated to arrange marriages for their children, and with few exceptions they do so. They most frequently look for spouses outside of the village. They expect that a girl will leave the village to live with her husband and that a farming son will bring his wife to Vasilika to live with him (technically, patrilocal residence). In Vasilika, when the villagers speak of the engagement of a man or a woman, they say, "He (she) has become engaged in Mirali;" or in Sfaka, or in Athens, or in whatever village or town the prospective spouse comes from. They explain the prevalence of exogamy, to which the phrase just quoted gives linguistic expression, by saying that it is too difficult to find, inside Vasilika, anyone who is sufficiently distantly related to be eligible for marriage.

583 62 [608 795]

The custom of the village prohibits marriage between relatives on both the mother's and father's side to the degree of third cousin. In a village with a total population of 216, in which there are six sets of adult brothers and one group of three men whose fathers were brothers, there will certainly be limits to the number of boys and girls eligible to marry each other. The number of families connected by kin ties in the village is even larger, however, because in each generation there are some marriages that do take place among fellow villagers and this, of course, relates some of the village's children to each other through their mother's line, even if their fathers have no paternal relatives in Vasilika. Kinship connections are further extended within the village by the ceremonial kinship ties of godparenthood. On the ground that any godparental relationship between two individuals automatically places not only the individuals concerned but both their elementary families into close kin relations, the Greek Orthodox Church prohibits marriages between the two families to the same degree that would be necessary if they were consanguineal; that is, blood relatives.

584 [583]

When a daughter is to be married, the father of the girl is believed to have ultimate responsibility for giving the dowry. However, the brothers' interests are involved, the mother is deeply concerned about the future of her daughter, and certainly the girl herself wants to know something about her prospects. In the informal discussions that go on within the family, everyone participates and expresses his point of view. The father alone, however, has the formal responsibility for conducting the negotiations, which are always carried on with the aid of a *proksenitis* or *proksinitra* (marriage intermediary). In the Boeotian countryside, this person (either a man or a woman) is a friend or relative, either is village custom for both boy and girl to act as if they know nothing about the 584 discussions going on. At the first formal meeting, both the boy and girl have the right to express any personal antipathy they may have for the prospective spouse. But if the marriage is otherwise an advantageous one, they are likely to be persuaded to overcome any but the most extreme feelings of repugnance. The [581] villagers are not callous about the matter of personal compatibility between spouses; they assume, however, that if the marriage conditions are right, a harmonious relationship will develop, and if it does not, the successful economic or prestige conditions of the marriage will help to allay sufferings arising from the lack of personal contentment.

Once the major provisions of the marriage contract are agreed upon, the machinery for the formal engagement gets under way. This involves, first, a visit by the groom, his father, and several of his other relatives, but not his mother, to the home of the bride. Here the men again check on the agreements, the father of the groom pins a single *lira* on the bride, the bride's mother pins a *lira* on the groom; there is food and drink, and the bride gives gifts of small items such as socks, stockings, pillow cases, or towels to the groom and his entire group. For the women, this process is important; what is given on the one hand, and what is received on the other, is discussed by the women on both sides with great zest and frequent criticism. If this affair raises no issues which lead to the dissolution of the agreements, [574] about ten days later, the bride's father invites his own relatives and those of the groom from wherever they are in Greece to a large engagement party which lasts from a Saturday night through to Sunday. The bride's neighbors and the groom's friends also come.

From the time of the ceremonial exchange of the *lires*, the young couple are considered formally engaged. They are now free not only to see each other but to travel anywhere together, and the groom may even come and stay at the girl's home for some time. In the villagers' view, if the young couple have [836] proper respect for both sets of parents they will refrain from sex relations during [626] this period. Certainly if the girl becomes pregnant before the wedding there is disapproval not only because of the moral stigma, but also because it requires an immediate wedding at a time when the accumulation of the agreed-upon dowry property may not yet have been completed. A premature ceremony is therefore not advantageous to the groom. Engagements lasting a year or more are frequent, and the villagers speak of unfortunate situations in which this status has been protracted for as long as ten years.

Weddings in Vasilika in recent years, the villagers say, have become less 178 elaborate and less of a village event than they once were. As later sections will 585 show, many of the village girls marry men in the towns, and this frequently [621] results in having the wedding in the town church rather than in Vasilika. Moreover, the villagers say, this system obviates the necessity of inviting large numbers of villagers to the wedding feast and so cuts down on the cost to the bride's father.

At weddings held in the village between children of farmers, however, much of the tradition is maintained. For example, the groom's male relatives 583 come to the house of the bride on the Saturday afternoon before the Sunday 585

professor who has become the principal of his gymnasium. In 1961, however, 581
the son of a rather prosperous village farmer became attracted to a daughter 583
of another Vasilika farmer with good land holdings. The young man asked his 556
father to arrange the marriage for him, and, since all the conditions were entirely 182
suitable, the young couple were engaged.

The trend in favor of town husbands prevails, however, among most of 428
those who can afford it. Once a few girls had married urban men, the rivalry 369
between village families led to greater efforts to secure town husbands for the
others. Consequently, there has been an inflation in dowries which is alarming [621] ●
the villagers themselves. In the early 1950's, a *prika* worth $3,000 was enough
for a town husband of no special prestige; by the late 1950's, the same kind of [458]
man was asking for one worth $4,500.

The inflation has had several consequences. Often the value of the dowry can no longer be limited to the share of the inheritance to which a girl is entitled. Farming sons are willing to give up some portion of their shares so that
their sisters can "live well," as they put it. The brothers gain also from the added [593]
prestige and influence of the family. These in turn may make it possible for them to find a girl with a larger dowry than their property qualifications might warrant. A farmer so situated may make higher demands on the ground that
his and his wife's children will have an urban aunt and uncle. The town sister [873]
might provide board for her nephews and nieces (girls are increasingly being sent to gymnasium) while they are in school and can also be expected to help them find jobs.

Another consequence of the dowry inflation is the increasingly late age of 582
marriage for the village girls and the town men. It takes farmers longer to 583
accumulate the larger amounts of cash for the dowry, and the prospective 369
grooms longer to attain a position or income at least partially commensurate. 556
Vasilika's girls who marry town men are usually between twenty-five and thirty. 182
Those whose fathers have few land holdings, and consequently can offer only small dowries, have been marrying farmers from other villages or within Vasilika itself and have been in their early twenties at the time of the engagement.

Now let us consider the disposition of the dowry which goes with a girl 583
marrying a town husband. First, if he accepts land as part of the dowry, he 425
will of necessity have it worked by his wife's male relatives. In time, however, 454
often by the end of the first decade of the marriage, the son-in-law may wish to 369
expand his shop, or may wish to start building a house for himself or for his daughter's dowry, or may hear of a good investment opportunity. He will want money for these purposes, and so he begins, with his wife's consent and after consultation with her father, to arrange for the sale of dowry lands. Since the 1950's, prospective town grooms have been less willing to take land which they know they will eventually want to sell, and have been asking for cash or for a house in town. Anticipating this situation, several of Vasilika's farmers who have small daughters have begun to use their savings and even to sell a little land in order to build houses in Athens or in a provincial town so that by the time their daughters are ready to marry, the houses will provide the main portion of the dowry.

5

Human Relations[1]

Attitudes Toward Man and Nature

IF IT WERE NECESSARY to describe the nature of the villagers' feelings with 82
respect to each other and the world in one word, that word would be 156
"tension." Indeed, in the first chapter, the metaphor of Vasilika as a setting 621
for a series of family dramas was used. The metaphor has a special aptness because it hints at the essential quality of drama—tension created by some kind of struggle. John Peristiany speaks of the agonistic quality of relationships among the Cypriot villagers he knows—agonistic in the sense of the ancient Greek word *agon* (match or struggle). This word is equally useful for Vasilika, although the contests do not appear to have quite the intensity of those described for Cyprus. Nevertheless, in Vasilika, when one walks through the fields and asks how the work is going, the common response is *"Palevume,"* "We are wrestling." Such an answer is not a cliché in which the literal meaning is lost. The villagers can amplify with further comments on their perpetual contest with 82
soil, weather, and machinery. Man does not always win, in their view, but he 777
is obligated to do his best and to use skill in the struggle. In contemporary Vasilika, the skill involves knowledge of naturally efficient means, and anyone who does not do his best in this sense is unintelligent and deserves to lose the battle. Those who try may still fail, and then the villagers turn to fate or to God's will as an explanation. But an appeal to fate or to God is never an excuse for neglecting actions which are humanly possible, and sometimes this is overtly expressed. For example, one farmer, at a time of unseasonable drought, remarked as he looked at his tobacco fields, "I won't make the sign of the cross, I'll bring my pump over here and irrigate the field." His intent was not blasphemous; he was not an irreligious man from the standpoint of village beliefs and practices. Rather, the farmer was expressing an explicit attitude in

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[1] Lee (1953) is especially relevant to this chapter, and is strongly recommended for further discussion.

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777 village culture: man must use human means toward human ends, and this is his
first obligation not only to himself but to God.

156 In Vasilika, the same tension—the sense of a contest, of struggle, of
agony, of a kind of pushing and pulling—is also a feature of a large number
578 of encounters with other human beings. In earlier discussions I referred to the
621 economic rivalries among families in the village and to the efforts to keep family
activities private to the point where a kind of espionage is practiced by all the
villagers to uncover secrets. These contests we may now understand as one manifestation
of the agonistic quality of many human relationships within the village.
But seemingly perpetual battles require an occasional respite; the nervous vitality
593 which they drain must be replenished. In Vasilika, some relationships within
the family seem to contribute the respite and the energy to go on fighting the
battles, whereas others appear to create the sense that perpetual struggle, principally
outside the family, is a part of life. The family both starts the battle
and also manufactures and distributes the weapons with which to fight it.

156 What is the ultimate aim of the battle, if I may continue the metaphor?
828 It would seem that each man and woman seeks for identity, for a concept of
self, and given the conditions of Greek village culture and its values, the
57 search is carried on by pitting oneself against another, or against fate. One
578 learns to know oneself primarily by contrast with others; and therefore the
maintenance of some difference is a necessity. Contrasts, and the tension contrasts
create, become expected and desired. Without change and variation the
villagers lose their sense of life. But the need to engage in perptual struggle is
an emotional burden, especially because there must be some who lose in the
558 contests. A man is not completely disgraced in the villagers' view, however, if
he is bested in an encounter with another man, provided that he was willing to
engage himself in the struggle in the first place and showed skill in his conduct
of it. Just as agricultural failure is attributable to uncontrollable forces only
777 if a man did his physical best, so failure in human relations is attributable to
some other force only if a man has first made a creditable effort. It would seem
that it is not the outcome but the continuing *aghonia* that gives a village man or
woman the feeling that he is a functioning human being, that he has an identity,
that he is alive. *"Perazmena, ksehazmena,"* "What is past is forgotten," the
villagers say, and although they say so mostly in connection with unpleasantness,
the saying is equally applicable to victories. For both victory and defeat
are shortlived; a new area of battle constantly supersedes the old.

156 This struggle is not something which is entered into as a new pattern
828 when men and women take on the responsibilities of a family, after a childhood
spent without it. On the contrary, Vasilika's culture is one of those in
867 which there is a continuity in the behavior and attitudes expected of children,
858 adolescents, and adults. There are no sharp breaks; from their earliest days the
upbringing of children plunges them into the role of agonist, and skills for
functioning in this fashion are acquired in all stages of a child's development.

The villagers assume that intelligence and self-control are basic human
qualities which differentiate men from animals. The villagers are in many ways

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wife must overcome overt cultural attitudes of deference and covert attitudes of sexual mistrust as well as what are undoubtedly unconscious conflicts about sexuality.

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If there is tension between men and women in Vasilika, why is it possible to say that agonistic relationships do not exist between them? It is because the cultural differentiation and separation of the sexes makes them unequal and therefore not in a position for the direct, overt competition of which agonistic relations consist. The maintenance of this differentiation in the qualities and characteristics of women acts as a foil for the men—once again the contrast gives meaning to the self. For women, also, the contrast serves as a means of self-identification.

[593]
[621]

If age and sex are not the lines along which agonistic relations occur in Vasilika, then what is the structure of these relationships? Essentially, agonistic relations occur among those who, from the standpoint of village culture, are both separate and equal, and among men of the same age categories and women of the same age categories who are not members of the same elementary family and are in the same or adjacent social positions. This includes brothers in their relationships with each other and sisters in theirs, once these have married and have elementary families of their own. I have already suggested that brothers are rivals, and sisters also compete for the greater success of their husbands and children. Within the village, people who are not related to each other compete also, as do the people of Vasilika with the inhabitants of neighboring villages.

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It is now possible to understand why, from the villagers' point of view, their cooperative arrangements with each other and with their urban connections tend to be impermanent (see the end of Chapter 4). Each request for help and each response to the request becomes part of the competitive struggle. The value of what is given and what is received must be judged at each encounter, and the potentialities for imbalance are always present and are frequently realized.

[621]

The alignments of kin and non-kin which lead outside the village and the quality of human relationships, both among the people of Vasilika and with those outside the village, have bearing on the nature of the village as a solidary community. This matter is the subject of the last chapter.

6

The Village: As a Community

The Village Government

● 621 IN THE FIRST CHAPTER the village was described as a setting for the life of families, which are the most significant social groups in the settlement. It now becomes possible to consider the functions of the village itself as an entity in its own right. First, the formal organization of village-wide activities and responsibilities will be discussed, and second, the attitudes of the inhabitants toward Vasilika in contrast with their attitudes toward the family and the nation.

[631] The Greek government classifies Vasilika as a *kinotis* for administrative
purposes despite its small population. A *kinotis* is legally a populated center with at least 300 inhabitants and a school, and constitutes one of the four kinds of administrative subdivisions in each of the nomes (provinces) of Greece.

622 The formal governmental activities of the *kinotis* are the responsibility of
623 a locally elected president and council. A community the size of Vasilika is
665 entitled to a council of five members elected for a four-year term. Voting must
be done along party lines; and voters select five names from among those listed
666 by the party of their choice. Vasilika had only two political parties in its local elections in 1956. Under the system of proportional representation then operating, the four men with the most votes from the party which itself had the majority of votes were elected to the council. The fifth member should have been the man with the most votes in the minority party. At the last Vasilika election, however, the man in this position preferred not to act as a minority representative and the second man on the list became the council member. The five representatives then elect a president and a vice-president from among their number, usually for two-year terms. The council and community are served by an addi-
624 tional official, the secretary of the *kinotis*. The secretary is not elected and has no
[634] vote on the council. He is appointed by the nomarch (governor) of the province
upon nomination from the village council. His salary varies with the income of

653 The reluctance of the villagers to work on the road seems to result not
461 from a lack of motivation but rather from a more compelling distaste for manual
491 labor, and especially for such work when it does not directly or immediately
benefit each man's own family. Several years later when a new school was built,
some of the parents of the school children helped with parts of the construction.
The other villagers did not.

651 The preparation of the community tax rolls is an important responsibility
623 of the village council. Since taxes are based on land tenure, on produce, and on
livestock ownership, the council must prepare lists of people who own land
within the boundaries of the *kinotis*. The lists include for each person information
on the number of *stremata* in each parcel of land he owns, on the kind of
crop raised on each parcel, and on the quality of the land. Lists of the number
of horses, mules, sheep, and goats owned by each villager are also compiled.
Donkeys and chickens are not taxed and no listing is made of them. The tax is
calculated for each item and the completed tax rolls are posted. A villager may
feel that he has been unfairly treated, that, for example, the quality of his vineyard
[627] has been overestimated or that he has fewer sheep than the number listed. In
such a case he can request a revision from the council. His request is usually
granted and that settles the matter. If he is not satisfied, he may ask for a hearing
before a grievance committee, the members of which are proposed by the
council from among the villagers. Any decision of the committee is subject to
[634] the veto of the nomarch. In Vasilika disputes over tax rolls are said not to occur,
651 and no grievance committee has been established for many years. There had
628 been a dispute with Parori in the 1930's over the boundaries of the two communities.
Since each *kinotis* receives taxes from the land within its boundaries the
692 question of where one *kinotis* begins and the other ends is of considerable importance.
The argument between the two villages was finally settled in the courts.

441 In connection with the preparation of tax rolls, the president has some
power over the shepherds living in the community. Anyone classified as a nonresident
651 of Vasilika must pay double the rate for pasturing his animals there. If
621 no permission has been granted, he must pay triple the rate for residents. The
233 question of when and if the new settlers in Vasilika—the shepherds, who had
been living there since 1950—would be considered residents of Vasilika, that is,
[622] full-fledged citizens of the *kinotis*, was of significance both to the village and to
the shepherds. They were finally granted this privilege in 1959.

423 The actual process of preparing the tax rolls consists of a series of agreements
among the villagers, including their council members, as to what amount
651 of property they will declare. In consequence, the tax rolls do not necessarily
[623] represent an accurate and complete accounting of property ownership in the
kinotis. Farmers often try to hide some of their holdings and keep some of their
[583] transactions quiet. For example, in order to pay less in taxes on the value of
dowries, the records may show the transfer of a smaller parcel of land to the
groom than the one privately agreed on and later privately carried out. Records
[652] are probably being kept more accurately now, since credit from the Agricultural
Bank is based on land holdings, and proof of ownership must be given to the
bank.

872 school teachers in that village, and whose father had been a school official. They
lived in Parori and the school teacher walked back and forth each day. He is
875 a man much interested in improving the standard of living in the region by
increased arboriculture, by the maintenance of kitchen gardens, and by the
raising of rabbits, pigeons, and other fowl for food. The teacher covers the
standard academic curriculum—reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history
(with emphasis on the ancient and modern history of Greece), and Greek lan-
guage, as well as some religion. For the most part, he uses the traditional meth-
[876] ods of rote learnng, but occasionally he includes some material on farm prac-
tices in his lessons, and tries different teaching techniques. On one occasion he
supplemented the geography lesson by having the children make in the schoolyard
an earth model of the topography of the Peloponnesus. He had them bring
small samples of each of the products grown in the different regions of that
part of Greece to place on the appropriate spot on the model.

In 1959, there was much favorable comment in the village because the
schoolteacher had succeeded in having the new school built in just four months
—a very short period for construction work of that kind in the region. But the
[609] schoolteacher is always partly an outsider for Vasilika because he neither comes
from nor lives in the village.

The school and its teacher are a focus of interest for all village families
with school-age children. Not only does the school have its obvious educational
[861] functions, but the teacher is a supplementary authority with whom parents can
threaten their children, and the success of their children in school is a source
of great pride to the parents.

872 On two occasions in the course of the year the school becomes a focus of
527 interest for the entire village. The first of these is *Ochi* Day (the 28th of Octo-
ber), when the school children wear the old rural costumes and declaim patriotic
[292] poems to commemorate the day in 1940 when the Greeks said "No!" to the
[648] Italian ultimatum and started to repell the Italian invasion. This is a national
holiday, and the village president and the priest participate. On the *Ochi* Day
[541] that we witnessed, however, the audience for the ceremonies was small because
the adults were out in the fields picking cotton.

[796] The second occasion is the more important one, *Evangelizmos*, the Feast
of the Annunciation on the 25th of March. That is the official date on which, in
[541] 1821, the start of the revolution against the Turks was proclaimed by a bishop,
and it is celebrated in Vasilika by children's recitations at the church services and
by a school dramatic performance afterwards. The teacher selects the playlets,
[536] which usually include several that are re-enactments of the partly legendary
incidents of the revolution. After the children have performed, the young men
[522] of the village present one or two mildly bawdy skits, which derive their humor
partly from the antics of the boys who are assigned female roles and wear
women's clothes. After the plays, the children, still in costume, perform some
[535] of the folk dances of the region, accompanying themselves with songs. *Evan-
gelizmos* is one of the few times in the course of the year when virtually the
[621] entire village appears at an event. Villagers of all ages and both sexes come to

watch the plays, and together concentrate their attention for over an hour on 872
exactly the same activity. 527
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The Village Church

The affairs of the church in Vasilika are administered by the priest 794
with the aid of a committee of four men. Committee members are selected for
three-year terms by the bishop from a list sent by the priest. One of the members [793]
of the committee is the treasurer for the church. He makes the collections at
services and generally supervises the church's funds. In Vasilika income for the [427]
church is derived from the Sunday collections, the sale of offerings of wheat
and olive oil made on special feast days, the sale of candles, rent on church
property such as the old school building and the community office (both of
these buildings were put up by the church as an investment), and the sale of
produce from some twenty church-owned *stremata*. The priest is now given a [793]
small salary by the national government, but one-quarter of the church's income
must be returned to the national treasury as a partial contribution of the com- [659]
munity to the priest's salary. The other expenses of the church include the [465]
salaries (eighty drachmas a month) paid to each of the chanters and to the
sexton. In Vasilika, the latter office is held by a sixty-year-old woman who is
often assisted in her duties by her grandchildren. The physical maintenance of [358]
the buildings is also a responsibility of the church committee, and in 1959 they
arranged for an extensive renovation of the main church.

The description just given is that of the formal organization of church 793
affairs. In Vasilika the priest himself has more than his share of influence on
all decisions and, indeed, it was said that one of the committee members in 1956 [794]
never went to any meetings of the church committee (they are said to be held
about four times a year). The priest is a native of Vasilika, in his sixties.
He is a strong, vigorous, and imposing figure, somewhat taller than the average
villager and with a personality, temper, and voice to match. As he chants the [788]
liturgy the priest's deep voice fills the church, so that the elegant cadences of
the Greek Orthodox mass gain added beauty. Because the priest and his sons [554]
have arranged his patrimony well, the priest as a private landowner is one of
the more prosperous men in the village and for that reason, as well as for his
personal qualities, he commands considerable respect.

Under the leadership of the priest, church affairs can, on rare occasions, 793
involve the entire male population of the village. At about one o'clock on a
rainy Sunday afternoon in the fall of 1955, the church bell rang. The men 794
and the boys of the village streamed down the hill into the *aghora*. There they 626
stood in the heavy rain as the priest, in his flowing black robes, as usual, and
holding the only umbrella in the gathering over himself, began an impassioned 537
oration. Several men responded with equal eloquence and after about a half-hour [293]
of speeches, they disbanded. It seems that one of the shepherds, who had rented [427]
a church-owned small house, was refusing to pay the rent asked of him. He had

793 been threatened with eviction but had not responded even to this. The priest
794 had called the men of the community together to try to get backing for his
626 decision to evict the man. The authority was granted him on that rainy Sunday,
537 but the shepherd finally agreed to go part way toward meeting the demand and
continued to live in the house.
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Religious Feast Days

796 If the formal organization of church affairs involves village-wide action
[621] or concern only in times of crisis, certain feasts and ceremonies of the Greek
Orthodox Church certainly provide a focus of interest for the entire village
at regular intervals during the year. The most conspicuous of these is the sequence
of events by which the villagers celebrate Easter. The Sunday before Lent
begins is the particular day which starts the holiday observances in Vasilika.
After church services, children ran about in the morning trying to throw
796 powdered soot at each other and at unsuspecting adults. Later in the day, the
children and unmarried men and women dressed in costumes in preparation for
292 the arrival of the musicians—this time there were a clarinetist, a violinist, and
534 the player of a *sanduri* (dulcimer). Some boys and girls dressed as animals and
their trainers went around in groups trying to frighten the very small children
or just laughing at their own antics. The young people dressed themselves as
gypsies, and some of the boys put on women's clothes and walked around with
mincing steps and female gestures, while some of the girls donned men's
[535] clothes and twirled false moustaches. Throughout the afternoon and early evening
the musicians sat in the *aghora* and the young people and their elders
danced in the space between the two coffeehouses, as virtually all the rest of the
village population sat and watched. Some spectators sat at the coffeehouse tables
796 drinking beer or soda; others brought chairs from home to sit along the walls of
534 the houses near the *aghora.* Still others watched from second-story windows
535 overlooking the area. All the spectators sat quietly and without expression. Those
[273] who danced paid the musicians and occasionally the watchers would proffer a
glass of *ouzo* (anise liqueur) to the male dancers and to the musicians.

The dances themselves were the most commonly known traditional round dances of the Greek countryside: the *kalamatyanos, sirtos,* and *tsamikos,* danced in Vasilika by both men and women, but usually not at the same time. Men danced the *zembekikos* and the *khasapikos* as solos.

[562] On this occasion, and on any other when musicians came to the village,
[275] the women of some of the more sophisticated families joined their male relatives
sitting around the small coffeehouse tables.

In the evening, several families joined together for a meat-eating feast,
796 after which bonfires were lit in different sections of the village; this time the
[574] adults joined in the carnival spirit of practical jokes and danced and sang in
[484] the security of their own neighborhoods until early morning. The next day is
"Clean Monday." Many of the villagers visited Kifisokhori, which has a carnival
[541]

candles from the priest's, or from each other's if they got impatient waiting 796
to reach the priest. The second climax was, of course, the moment when, with 788
the entire congregation standing outside the church, the priest announced, [541]
"Khristos anesti," "Christ is risen," and the boys set off firecrackers.

After the service, people took a short nap, because by 6:00 in the morn- 796
ing, final preparations for Easter dinner would start. As has already been indi- 574
cated, families joined with neighbors or relatives to eat the spit-roasted Easter
lamb. Visiting relatives moved about to greet the villagers they knew. Baptisms, [262]
which had been arranged for the afternoon because prospective godparents [851]
enjoyed visiting the village at Easter, took place in the church, and the white
baptismal clothes of the babies added sparkle to all the Easter finery. After an [292]
afternoon service in the church of St. Nicholas, the musicians came, settled in
the *aghora,* and dancing began. But fewer villagers participated in either the [534]
dancing or the watching than at Carnival, because people preferred to spend [535]
more time at home with their visiting relatives. Nevertheless, a good crowd
kept the *aghora* musicians occupied until eight in the evening, after which
singing could be heard here and there about the village. The next day some of
the young boys claimed to have been up singing half the night.

The description just given is only a brief outline of the main events 796
and lacks many details of the village's celebration of Easter. My purpose in in-
cluding it here is to illustrate the point that Carnival and Holy Week are times 621 ●
at which the Greek Orthodox rites and the accompanying customs provide ac- 574
tivities in which all villagers participate at the same time and within the confines of Vasilika. Even under these circumstances, however, the visiting relatives act as a countervailing centrifugal force, pulling each family in the direction of its extra-village interests, as they use the holiday visit as an opportunity for family consultations on the problems of the coming year, and as the visitors tell of their lives in other villages, in towns, and in the cities.

Vasilika's *paniyiri,* the feast day of its patron saints, St. Cosmos and 796
St. Damian, on the 1st of July, is another occasion when a religious event is 794
celebrated by the entire village and draws visitors to the community. Other holy
days and Sunday masses do not draw all the villagers together in the same 621
way. School children are the most faithful communicants for regular Sunday [574]
mass; a small proportion of women and girls attend regularly, but the rest of
the inhabitants appear to attend sporadically, as they please. During periods of [776]
heavy agricultural work, mass may be omitted on a Sunday. For the most part, individuals and families, rather than the village, are the units for participation in the formal religious activity of the settlement.

The Villagers as Greeks

To summarize the situation, the formal organization of the village 621
community, the *kinotis,* provides neither autonomy in village affairs nor a uni- 631
fied structure. Decisions made by the village leaders are subject to approval by outside political authorities. Governmental, commercial, religious, and educa-

621 631 tional activities, although ultimately controlled in Athens, function through different organizational channels. The unity that might be achieved by overlapping personnel in a village as small as Vasilika is not, in fact, achieved because each of the formal divisions has its own leadership. Some degree of concurrence exists, however, as a result of the tendency for the leaders in each of these spheres, except the governmental, to remain relatively permanent. The priest has been the religious leader of the community for a generation, the former secretary of the council had been in office for twenty years, the school teacher has been there [208] for ten years, and so on. Nevertheless, officials who want to persuade Vasilika's population to some new course of action know that they cannot succeed by persuading the formal leaders only, or even the influential older men only, but must convince each head of a family, as well, if they are to get widespread compliance.

621 476 571 It would seem as though the formal organization of the village, and the family activities which so often lead out of the village and separate the interests of each family from those of others in the settlement, prevent the life-long daily associations of the men of the village from producing a driving force for enthusiastic joint action for village-wide goals. Nor does the system of voluntary, impermanent dyadic contracts between individuals produce any large groups with a sense of solidarity. As the foregoing has shown, then, there are activities which focus the attention of all the villagers but there is little active village-wide cooperation for village enterprises.

621 186 Yet this situation seems to conflict with the professed attitude of Vasilika's inhabitants toward their village and region. The villagers speak of Vasilika in the way Greeks from other villages speak of their home communities. A man or woman's *patridha*, that is, his village of origin in this context (*patridha* may mean Greece as one's nation of origin in contrast with other nations), is always recommended as a place to visit. People frequently mentioned certain qualities of their home villages which were worthy of praise. The air and the water, they would say, are clean, in the sense of pure and sweet, and these characteristics, they thought, made the village a healthy place, [609] and, by extension, potentially therapeutic for anyone. The people of one's own village were *endopyi* (home folks) in contrast to *kseni* (strangers), and the term *kseni* was used equally to refer to a man from Parori two miles away, and to us from the United States thousands of miles distant.

186 609 123 685 621 *Kseni,* people not living in Vasilika, were described as thieves and as inhospitable. We were consistently told to lock our automobile in other villages, and also consistently told that it was not necessary to do so in Vasilika. Indeed, both with respect to other villages and within Vasilika itself, a distrust of others was most frequently expressed by saying that the villagers in question were thieves, and it was an accusation not meant lightly. On two occasions before we understood the situation, when we mislaid a pair of scissors and some clothespins, we asked the family with which we lived whether any one of them had seen the lost items. The family construed the question as an accusation that they had stolen the items from us, and it took several hours of reassuring conversation 000 to convince them that we had meant nothing of the kind. Evidence suggests that

621

Evidence suggests that 186
an individual's or family's *filotimo* would be considered severely damaged if
they stole from a stranger to whom hospitality had been offered; in fact, such 609
thefts are very rare in any Greek village. Within Vasilika itself, there was some 574
petty filching now and then, but it did not occur on the scale one would have [577]
expected from the frequent references to theft and thieving in conversation. [828]

The inhospitality of people in other places was a frequent topic of con-
versation at the homes of those celebrating name days. A man could always [685]
raise a laugh by describing the ludicrously meager food and drink provided at [521]
a wedding or name day celebration he had attended at another village. Usually [522]
in response to any questions about the occurrence in Vasilika of deviant be-
havior, or of some form of discord, or of some moral transgression, the villagers [183]
began by making a general statement of denial. Such things happened in other
villages, they would say, but not in Vasilika.

It would seem from the foregoing that Vasilika's population did, indeed, 621
identify itself with the village as an entity. Vasilika is their *patridha*, and it 186
must be thought to have good qualities, I believe, because the village's qualities
reflect on its inhabitants both in their status as individuals and as families. Pride 156
in the village, then, may be an extension of pride in oneself or one's family, 828
and the functional consequences for village-wide enterprises of the existence of 476
such pride depend on the strength of the competing sources of satisfaction.

In Vasilika, since farms may be maintained by the labor of the elementary [594]
family with only periodic requirements for a larger labor force, since sons and
daughters leave the village and yet maintain relationships with those still in [464]
Vasilika, and since individuals can expect to give and to receive protection from their families, the forces leading toward either independence or family solidarity would appear to be strong enough to leave little energy for village-centered activities as a method of augmenting self-esteem. Nevertheless, the village as an entity constitutes a permanent potential source of satisfaction for its inhabitants, and now and then, under certain circumstances, the village itself becomes the primary object of loyalty for its population and commands some sacrifice. The boundary dispute with Parori was such an occasion for Vasilika.
Moreover, any individual can, if he wishes, use his energies when he occupies an [663]
official position to gain improvements for the village as a means of enhancing
his own self-esteem and of gaining the respect of the villagers, as long as he [554]
does not do so at the expense of his own children. The people of Vasilika are
entirely willing to enjoy and to speak proudly of the electricity, or the piped [185]
water, or the better roads in Vasilika, once they have obtained them, even if they are not always willing to work together to achieve the improvements.

But Vasilika, as a village, must compete with another focus of loyalty 619
for its inhabitants besides the family: Greekness itself—and the Greek nation
as a political entity. The villagers' awareness of and pride in their Greekness is 829
profound. In 1956 when we were questioning the children as to what they [621]
wanted to be when they grew up, several boys answered that they hoped God would let them grow strong and sturdy so that they could be good soldiers and
go to "Fight for Cyprus." Moreover, the villagers associate certain qualities [181]
with Greek ethnicity: the desire for political independence and the willingness

ambivalence that is usually found in mobile societies between participants in 369
different levels of culture and occupants of different prestige and power levels 602
in the social structure. I do not suggest a relationship entirely free of suspicion 554
or jealousy, but there is considerable evidence that the villagers take substantial pride in the very fact that their urban kin have a social position of greater prestige. The latter often view their country relatives with no more
than a mildly paternal condescension. Charges of urban snobbishness on the [186]
one hand, and of peasant crudeness on the other, are usually reserved for those outside the circle of one's own kin.

The line of urban cultural influence, then, runs something like this: New ideas and attitudes, and changes in style of life, are brought to the notice of a village family by its urban relatives. However, if a village household adopts at least some of the new traits, it is only partly because of the respect which it
pays to its urban kin. A more powerful influence is often the strong sense of [578]
competition which the rural household feels toward other village families, on [621]
which it hopes to score a point by showing superior sophistication. Those village families which have no urban relatives gradually try to copy the behavior of those which do. Some degree of urban influence stemming from urban relatives of villagers therefore penetrates the entire village community.

Such competition for prestige often encourages spending beyond the boundaries of economic wisdom, quite on the "keeping up with the Joneses" pattern. 369
So the resources of the villagers may be used for elegant urban-style clothes 511
which are attractive at Easter but are soon afterwards worn for ordinary work. [291]
A lightweight wool dress, for example, is unwearable in a few months after
having been washed several times in hot water and pounded with a paddle to [296]
release the soil and other dirt which clings to it. The same sort of thing holds for men's shoes. They are standard city shoes which are worn for heavy farm work throughout the year with no boots or other protection from the weather
However, it is also significant that the imitation of urban styles accounts for
other kinds of innovations. For example, it has become fashionable to build [514]
new-style privies which are an improvement on the sanitary facilities in the village. The new type has a concrete floor which slopes down toward a center hole, or has a specially made ceramic fixture incorporating the slope and center hole, instead of movable wooden floor boards arranged to leave a space in the
center—or, of course, no privy at all. There is also a new fashion in the building [343]
in which such facilities are housed. If possible, it will now be constructed of
brick rather than of wattle and daub or of reed. To give another instance, the [758]
imitation of urban styles has also undoubtedly contributed to the increasing willingness of the villagers to be hospitalized for serious illness (Friedl 1958).

The description of continuous face-to-face contact with village relatives 369
given in this paper holds well for at least the generation that has itself left the 574
village, and for its children. The grandchildren of those who left the village for 602
the towns will, when they become adult, make fewer visits back to the village, 554
and the ties of association between country and city relatives gradually loosen with the passage of time. But, since social mobility is a continuing phenomenon

[Town Life]

621 Even in Athens-Piraeus this pattern is observed in many of
369 the neighborhoods into which the two cities divide. The majority of Athenians live in suburbs which date back only to 1923
and the years immediately after, when tens of thousands of
refugees from Asia Minor crowded into the town. Many of
these communities have a strong corporate sense of their own,
and live in much the same way as the smaller provincial towns
[513] already described. In the central part of Athens, however, life
pursues a rhythm more or less like that of any big European
city except that here, too, the midday siesta is rigorously observed. Also, new suburbs, inhabited by professional people and
employees, have in recent years grown up farther from the center of town; here little of the community spirit of the older
suburbs is to be found, and life rather resembles the dormitory
belt of a big American city.

369 The superabundant leisure so characteristic of village life is
517 also apparent in the towns. *Cafeneions* are numerous and nearly
275 always the sidewalk tables are well filled with men who obviously have no pressing business, if indeed they have any business at all.
[435] Street corners, curbs and squares are also occupied
by the poor, who cannot afford to pay for a seat by ordering a
coffee, even though a modest 2½ drachmae (7 cents) will confer title to a table for an entire morning.

369 Every considerable town has a fringe of unemployed and
464 semi-employed inhabitants, many of them migrants from vil-
166 lages who have come seeking some sort of job to supplement
[434] the inadequate income from their family farms. Such persons
can always go back to the village if need be, where at least they
can have a roof over their heads and something to eat. Even
when a man has been successful in finding regular employment
in a town, and makes his home there, he often continues to
maintain a connection with the village from which he, or his
[602] father or grandfather, came. Family ties are very strong in

369 ican aid programs on Greek society is to examine what has been
433 accomplished in a few typical villages, for only after the agrar-
x 178 ian problems of the nation have been somewhat relieved can there be much expectation of enriching or improving urban conditions.

● 621 Two general dividing lines separate the villages of Greece.
184 By far the most important is the contrast, explained in Chapter
433 1, between hill and plain, that is, between food-deficit and food-surplus rural communities. A second general distinction is be-
423 tween those villages that underwent radical redistribution of
x 178 land after World War I, and those where patterns of landownership have evolved piecemeal and privately without any massive governmental intervention. Generally, villages of the first type lie in the plains of the north, while all hill villages, and plains villages south of Thessaly, fall into the second category. In view of these important differences, it is necessary to study at least one village from each of these groupings.

621 Another point of distinction is the degree to which traditional
184 patterns of village life underwent change during the past ten
x 178 years. Some villages, whether by accident or thanks to intelligent and energetic leadership within the village, were able to undertake quite radical changes and profited very greatly from new techniques of agriculture. Others stayed generally within traditional frames. Still others were able to make only halfway satisfactory changes in old customs and techniques. It seems wise to try to illustrate different degrees of adjustment and improvement, first among plains villages, then among hill villages; and in each case to begin with an example of slight change and conclude with an example of maximally successful adjustment.

621 Before turning to an account of what particular villages have
631 done, however, it might be well to say something about village
578 leadership, and the relations between villagers and officials of the national government. Until 1951, the villages (and larger

communities) were governed by appointees of the Ministry of 621
Interior. This sometimes led to disharmony and distrust be- 631
tween the inhabitants and their legal representatives. In 1951, [578]
however, elections were organized in villages (and larger com- [666]
munities), so that for the first time since the war the people
had a chance to choose their own local officials. Villagers elect
members of the village council, which varies in size with the
size of the community. The council members then choose one of
their number as president and another as secretary.

The secretary's duty is to keep village records; but the main
responsibilities rest upon the president. He represents the vil- [627]
lage in all dealings with the outer world, and has an informal
authority to hear complaints and settle quarrels within the vil-
lage. Legal cases, however, lie beyond his competence; they are [692]
dealt with by regular judges, appointed by the Ministry of Jus-
tice.

A second center of village leadership is the church. Every 621
village has a church, and the priest is often a native of the vil- 793
lage, distinguished from his fellows by a special garb and the
fact that he has attended a seminary for a year or longer. Priests [794]
are appointed by bishops, but a congregation has the right to
refuse a nomination, or to object to a priest it dislikes. In such
cases the bishop normally attempts to find someone else to suit
the wishes of the community.

A third focus of leadership is the school system. Nearly every 621
village has a primary school, staffed by a teacher who has had 875
at least a secondary school education. Unlike the priest or the [872]
president, he is most often a stranger to the community, ap-
pointed to his post by the Ministry of Education. Here, in many [609]
villages, lies an important point of contact with the outside
world; but just because the schoolmaster is usually an outsider
and often a city man, he fails to command in most villages quite
the same trust and authority that the priest and president enjoy.

622 As one would expect in any small community whose members
624 are acquainted from childhood, the effectiveness of formal leadership
depends very much upon the personalities of the office
holders. In some villages, the president and secretary have little
[902] real importance. As a minimum, they must keep records to
allow the army to draft the young men when their age group
[653] is called up, and it is their duty to muster the able-bodied villagers
for a fixed number of days' labor on roads or other public
works when ordered to do so by officials of the central government.
[651] This labor service is the only form of direct taxation now
enforced upon peasants, and money payment may be substituted
for personal service if anyone cares to do so.

622 Only when a village chooses to undertake local improvements
631 requiring money or supplies from outside sources does
652 the sphere of local government expand from this legal minimum.
In such cases, the village president, perhaps assisted by
some other members of the council, is expected to represent the
village in all dealings with the agents of the central government
from whom help is sought; and if the village contracts a corporate
loan for some project, then the president becomes responsible
for collecting the sums needed to repay the loan.

● 621 Generally, the villagers of Greece have a deep-seated and not
654 altogether groundless distrust of outsiders, particularly of government
representatives, whom they suspect of being more
x 178 often out to fleece than to help them. Long and persistent persuasion
[609] is therefore usually required on the part of government
officials to overcome this suspicion, and open the way for technical
or other improvements in village life. More often than not,
the initiative in bringing about the changes which have come
to many villages in the past ten years came from outside the
village, from the central government. Only after a start had been
made, and the practical advantage of some new crop or technique
had been demonstrated on a small scale, did the farmers

crowd around for advice, loans, seed and the like, and begin 621●
to turn to their local village government for assistance in bringing 654
further improvements to the community. 178x

Let us now turn to specific cases, and see what has happened in six representative villages during the past ten years.

Villages of the Plains

LOFISCOS

Lofiscos is situated in the plain of Thessaly, about half a mile 361
off the main trunk road between Larissa and Volos. This is a [132]
region of hot summers and cold winters, for Thessaly is land- [133]
locked, surrounded west, east and south by precipitous mountains, and exposed to cold northern winds coming down from
the plateau of western Macedonia in winter. It is the best wheat [243]
land of Greece, and wheat is the major – indeed almost the
sole – crop raised by the villagers of Lofiscos today.

As the visitor approaches the village over a wandering track, [487]
deeply rutted by trucks that traverse the soft earth during the
muddy months of winter and spring, Lofiscos looks shabby and [356]
ill-kempt. Houses are scattered irregularly; little fresh paint is
in evidence. The dominant structure near the center of the vil- [712]
lage is a half-ruined rectangular stone tower that looks like and
in fact once was a small fortress.

Before 1881, the year in which Thessaly was annexed to 361
Greece, this building was inhabited by a Turkish pasha, who 423
owned the entire area which now belongs to the villagers of [712]
Lofiscos. The ground floor was his granary and stable; in the
upper story the great man lived with his harem. Since 1881 the building has been abandoned and allowed to decay slowly. The scattered huts in which the villagers live also survive from
Turkish times in almost every case. The inhabitants are the 000

Lofiscos

[Villages of the Plains]

423 427 [621] The inhabitants are the sons or grandsons of men who once tilled the Turk's lands for him on a sharecropping basis. They stayed behind when the Turk departed, and in due course fell heir to his land.

These changes did not happen all at once. When the Turkish landowner left he sold his rights to a wealthy Greek who lived in Larissa. The new landlord continued the old arrangements, with the difference that he was an absentee. Early in the twentieth century, however, widespread peasant unrest manifested itself in Thessaly, and in 1912 a law of expropriation was passed [425] against the large landowners. But it was not until 1920 that the effect of this law was felt in Lofiscos. In that year government surveyors and officials carried out a general distribution of the estate. Every male resident of the village nineteen years old or over was given possession of 137 stremmata of land (34¼ acres). In addition, 15 stremmata (3¾ acres) were assigned to each male member of a community of semi-migratory shepherds who had immemorially used these lands for winter pasture, paying a fee to the owner for the privilege of grazing their sheep on the stubble left after the grain harvest. A thousand stremmata (250 acres) remained in the possession of the absentee land- [621] owner. The rest of the land was left as common pasture. Much of it was unsuited to cultivation because of flooding in the spring; and in any case 137 stremmata was about all the land a single family could easily cultivate with the tools then available to them.

423 The land settlement of 1920 remained essentially unchanged thereafter. Many of the men who received their farms at that time are still alive; five families had moved into the village by 1956, but no one had moved away. The five newcomers owned no land at all, but worked for the established farmers of the village or, more often, on the big estate of the absentee owner. (Incidentally, this estate survived in 1956 as a working unit in spite of the land law of 1952 which forbade ownership of more

Lofiscos

[Villages of the Plains]

than 400 stremmata of cultivated land. Presumably the owner 423
had divided legal title among relatives or friends without surrendering real control of his land.)

The village is very small. In 1956 its population was only 621 ●
130,[1] yet it occupies no less than 6,000 acres, excluding the 423
absentee landowner's estate, which is counted as part of the
lands of Lofiscos by official government reckoning. This [162]
amounts to more than 46 acres per capita; and even though [161]
more than half of the land remains rough pasture, subject to
flooding for part of every year, such an abundance of land represents solid wealth by Greek peasant standards. And indeed, 621
the village is wealthy. Farmers find little difficulty in accumu- 511
lating gold sovereigns with which to dower their daughters,
for wheat is always in demand and a government purchase [435]
scheme keeps the price stable and well above world market
levels. In spite of the shabby appearance of their houses and
the untidy appearance of their clothes, the families of Lofiscos
are, by their own standards, very well off. Almost all of them [454]
probably have several hundred gold sovereigns hidden away,
but this no stranger could ever expect to know.

The tribulations of the second world war, of the occupation 621
and of the guerrilla war made almost no impression on Lofiscos. 178x
The young men served in the army, of course, and saw some- 669
thing of the outer world. But on their return they seemed to fit
back smoothly into the familiar routine. As the guerrillas never

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[1] This and all subsequent figures for village populations are rough approximations. Village records do not include any sort of census figure. They [659]
are confined to registration of births, marriages and deaths, and the most [217]
important function they serve is to provide the basis for the annual call-up of military recruits. Moreover, a family often remains registered in a village long after it has moved away; in such instances births and deaths are likely to be omitted from the village books, and may or may not be recorded elsewhere. One must therefore depend upon informal estimates of village officials. This leaves a considerable margin for error, unless the officials consulted are unusually careful.

Lofiscos

[Villages of the Plains]

621 penetrated so far into the heart of the Thessalian plain, the villagers
x178 saw nothing of them at first hand. Life went on smoothly,
[669] and the market for wheat was good. In general, then, the tenor
of life in Lofiscos is a thoroughly conservative one. In 1920 the
villagers attained their hearts' desire – possession of the land;
and since then nothing has happened to make them wish to
change the way they live.

x178 The general conservatism of the village is reflected in the
241 caution with which the farmers have taken up new techniques
433 and ideas. There was no pressing economic necessity to impel
them to experiment. Familiar methods and crops did well
enough. Yet there are at present real signs of technical change.
[652] In 1952 fertilizer came in for the first time. Up till then no one
in the village had used it. In that year, a representative of the
Agricultural Bank visited the village, and urged the farmers to
[243] buy fertilizer on credit. A few of them made the experiment;
the results they achieved convinced all the rest, for with fertilizer
the wheat crop was nearly twice what had been usual
before. Every farmer is now using fertilizer, and the net production
of the fields is rising accordingly.

[652] Then in 1956 a single farmer, more venturesome than his fellows,
contracted a five-year loan with the Agricultural Bank in
[406] order to install a well and pump with which to irrigate four
[312] acres. This represented a far greater departure from custom
than the use of fertilizer. Wheat does not need irrigation in
Thessaly, and to repay the cost of the well and pump new crops
[248] had to be introduced. Cotton was the answer, and the results
in 1956, when I visited the village, were already so promising
that several other farmers were planning to install a well-pump
irrigation system in their fields, and grow cotton the next year.
By doing so they can multiply their cash yield per acre several
times as compared to the traditional income from wheat farming.
This prospect is all the farmers need to persuade them to
go ahead.

Lofiscos

[Villages of the Plains]

on so much land. Purchase of machinery, like that used on 178x American farms, would be one way to solve this difficulty; hiring 241 labor from outside the village would be another, and more probable, course. 433 It is conceivable, however, that the villagers of Lofiscos may hesitate about bringing in strangers to work for them. There is a considerable feeling of clannishness among [609] the villagers, a clannishness perhaps reflecting their knowledge [621] that they are far, far better off than the great majority of their fellows, and a desire to keep what they know to be a good thing strictly to themselves. It will not be surprising if, a few years from now, reluctance to hire outside labor begins to hold back the development of more intensive farming in Lofiscos. But if and when the farmers do begin to offer jobs to poor men from the hills, some of the communities that have hitherto seen little benefit from the rising prosperity of villages like Lofiscos will begin to share at least a little in the economic advance of the plains.

All these possibilities lie in the future. In 1956 the village was supplying all its own labor and was just beginning to alter traditional ways. Few villages in Greece are so comfortably situated, and fewer still have such possibilities for further enrichment.

NEA ELEFTHEROHORI

Nea Eleftherohori lies at the foot of Mount Olympus, facing 361 the Thermaic Gulf, about twenty miles north of Katerini, the 621 local market center and regional metropolis. The name means New Free Village, and is a reminder of the fact that there is an older "Free Village" perched high on the slopes of Olympus. In [434] Turkish times, which lasted in this region until 1912, the men of the older Eleftherohori engaged in a little farming but for the most part depended for their living on the sale of firewood and on summer work as carpenters.

Nea Eleftherohori

[Villages of the Plains]

and thus made good a claim for 27 stremmata. The original 423
squatters' rights had been apportioned on the basis of the 425
amount of land actually tilled by a given family, and as a man 178x
or a boy could scarcely cultivate more than about 27 stremmata single-handed with the sort of equipment they had, the old families received about as much land as they had had before. The difference was that the sons escaped from parental control earlier than they would otherwise have done, since title to their share of the land was now vested individually, not, as traditionally, in the parental family as a whole.

The squatters of 1912 had not occupied all the cultivable 621
land. When they had all received their lots, therefore, almost 167
an equal number of refugees, mostly from the Caucasus area, [423]
were settled on the remainder. The two groups stood more or
less apart, especially at the beginning. Many of the customs of [563]
the Caucasus people seemed wild and barbarous to the old settlers. But because the old settlers felt little or no sense of grievance, and because each family was very nearly on a level of economic equality, with 27 stremmata apiece, the fissure between the two groups was not great. Nevertheless, the houses of the old settlers are still separated by about one hundred yards from those occupied by the refugees, so that the village is physically divided into two quite distinct parts.

In 1932 a supplementary land distribution took place, giving 423
families with more than four members an additional 5 strem- 425
mata; in 1937 a further adjustment was made when forty-three families removed to a newly drained area in the valley of the Aliakmon River, and left their allotments behind, to be reassigned in chunks of 5 stremmata to the larger families of Nea Eleftherohori. No further official changes have since been made, but the natural processes of death and inheritance have resulted in the splitting up of a few of the allotments into smaller farms, while in some cases formerly separate allotments have been

Nea Eleftherohori

[Villages of the Plains]

423 combined into one holding. The great majority of the families
425 of the village, however, still occupied 27 or 32 stremmata in 1956, and most of the original holders of the allotments were still alive.

x 178 The land settlement in Nea Eleftherohori differed from that
●621 in Lofiscos in two respects. First, the farms in Nea Eleftherohori
241 were less than one fifth as large as in Lofiscos. Second, the new
433 settlers, uprooted from their former homes, whether up the mountain or in distant Asia Minor, left binding customary ways of life behind them, and started off in Nea Eleftherohori without the automatic conservatism and suspicion of innovation typical until very recently of the families of Lofiscos. These differences acted together to make the farmers of Nea Eleftherohori a good deal more willing to try new crops and methods, even before the war, than those in the older Thessalian community. Life on so little land was difficult at best, and anything that promised to bring in a little more seemed worth trying; and when the problems of farming the land were new in any event, there was far less psychological resistance against trying some further innovation.

621 Another contrast with Lofiscos, a contrast perhaps related
163 to the general shake-up of old customary routines which came
433 to the inhabitants of Nea Eleftherohori between 1912 and 1923, is that the new settlers proceeded to procreate children at a far greater rate than occurs in Lofiscos, where families are mostly quite small.[2]

[2] It would be very interesting to know why the prosperous peasants of Lofiscos have fewer children than their much poorer fellows in Nea Eleftherohori, but I do not know Lofiscos well enough to hazard an opinion. Can it be that the general market orientation of their agriculture and the habit of calculating in monetary terms leads them to restrict the number of their children deliberately, in some fashion or other, realizing that to divide the family farm among many children spells impoverishment for

Nea Eleftherohori

[Villages of the Plains]

The smallness of the original farms and the large size of most 428
families in Nea Eleftherohori began, even in the late 1930's, to 423
present the villagers with a very serious problem. What were their children going to do? To divide the land was a desperate solution, inasmuch as the farms were already near the minimum that a single family could subsist upon. Somehow or other, all but one son had to be freed from the land, find some other form of livelihood, and leave the entire farm to be inherited by one brother. Hopeless poverty if not outright hunger was the certain lot of everyone who stayed on a divided inheritance.[3]

Nea Eleftherohori has been less fortunate than Lofiscos in 621! ●
still another respect. Situated at the foot of Mount Olympus, it 669
lay just on the edge of the territory that guerrilla bands con- 578
trolled in 1943–45 and again in 1947–49. These were, therefore, years of intense political insecurity in the village, and some loss of life. In 1947 the guerrillas organized a raid upon Nea Elef-

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the new generation? If so, why not in Nea Eleftherohori? To be sure, that 621
village pursued a more nearly subsistence style of agriculture between the 163
wars; but this fact by itself does not seem enough to explain the contrast.
Perhaps the prevalence of early marriages in Nea Eleftherohori, conse- 433
quent upon the mode of land distribution in 1927, accounts for the differ- [563]
ence, early marriages naturally bringing larger families; or perhaps some recklessness engendered by the catastrophic upheaval which the Asia Minor refugee population underwent encouraged large families, for there is in Nea Eleftherohori, as in all of Greece, a noticeable differential in birth rate between refugee and "old settler" groups, with the refugees standing higher.

[3] In legal form, the Greek government retained title to all the land dis- [656]
tributed to refugees and squatters after World War I. Part of the original justification for this policy was that it would permit the government to prevent excessive subdivision of peasant farms; and it was still the case in 1956 that legal tenure of each allotment was lodged in a single family head. This, however, did not prevent some families from dividing the allotments in practice among the heirs. Yet the fact that such divisions could not be legalized may perhaps have reinforced the reluctance of the families of Nea Eleftherohori to make them.

6: McNeill H-5 (1947,.1956) 1957

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621 therohori and plundered an UNRRA storehouse which had
669 been set up there. This was bad enough from the point of view
578 of the villagers; but what was far more awkward was the fact that sentiment was seriously divided within the village itself. Approximately half the population sympathized more or less completely with the guerrillas, and in 1947–48 about twenty young men and women from the village fought in their ranks. Only three of them returned. In 1947, when I first visited Nea Eleftherohori, the atmosphere was exceedingly tense. No one was quite sure of his neighbor, and no one was sure whether the government or the guerrillas would win in the end. Armed men patrolled the village at night on behalf of the government, and felt free to pay disconcerting calls upon families known or believed to be sympathetic with the guerrillas. Fifteen persons were arrested by the nearby gendarmes after the raid of 1947, and one of them was executed; the rest returned only after two and a half years of detention. The general mood of the village at that time was one of fear and frustration. No one could see any solution to the difficulties of the present, still less those of the future. What could the young boys do who were not needed at home? With no land available in the village, and no jobs obtainable in town, the situation seemed nearly hopeless.

By 1956 the outlook had changed. First of all, the political division within the village had healed over, leaving almost no trace. The renewed solidarity of village feeling dated from 1950, when the president and council of the community – who, as appointees of the Ministry of Interior, were of course leading anti-Communists – asked the local police to release two of the village boys who had returned from serving with the guerrillas and had been arrested on general suspicion. The police acted favorably upon this request, and allowed their prisoners to go free without further punishment. This affair, which showed a degree of magnanimity on the part of the anti-Communist lead-

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ers of the village since a son of one of them had been caught 621 ●
and killed in a guerrilla ambush near the village during the war, 669
inaugurated a new era in Nea Eleftherohori. Everyone felt re- 578
lieved that old feuds were not to be pursued, and made haste to forget the quarrels that had so long divided the village.

More important, or at least more promising for the long run, 178x
was that after 1950 the villagers began to see some hope of a 873
solution to their long-range difficulties. This hope was based on two innovations. They began to send nearly all their younger sons to secondary school, hoping thereby to qualify them for
jobs in town, away from the land. And they began to intensify [241]
their farming and to increase their cash income by raising mar- [434]
ket crops on a far greater scale than before.

The path to higher education was greatly facilitated by the proximity of a gymnasium (i.e., a "classical" high school), located in a large village about ten miles away. A bus service was [494]
instituted between Nea Eleftherohori and the school, enabling boys from the village to attend classes and still live at home.
Since there were no tuition fees, secondary school education be- [511]
came comparatively cheap; though even so, the cost of books and other supplies was, for many families, a serious matter. By 1956 no fewer than thirty-six boys from Nea Eleftherohori were attending the gymnasium. This number included almost every boy of appropriate age who had an elder brother, that is, almost every boy who would not inherit a farm. Roughly one third of all the families of the village had a boy in the gymnasium.

Since 1950, a number of changes in farming methods have 178x
also occurred. The first was the use of fertilizer. A few farmers 241
had experimented with it before the war, but it cost so much 433
that they found that in a year of bad or only middling weather they could not make enough on the extra yield of their fields to pay off the debt incurred to buy it. Hence use of fertilizer was abandoned, to be resumed only in 1950. By 1956 "everybody"

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x 178 riages. Until the means for living respectably can be assured,
511 the families of Nea Eleftherohori are no longer willing to allow
582 their children to marry, nor do the children themselves wish it.
[583] In 1956, a young man who would inherit a farm of 27 strem-
mata expected his bride to bring with her a dowry of about 300
gold pounds. This is a truly extraordinary figure for any family
in the village to raise, equal to $3,000 in American currency
and considerably more in local purchasing power. Ten or fif-
teen years of strenuous saving are required to accumulate so
much, all the more since appearances have to be maintained in
[589] the meantime, and this takes money too. Consequently, a good
many men and women in their thirties and some in their early
forties remain unmarried.

x 178 Once again, a partial exception must be made for the refu-
582 gees, among whom the dowry system is not so universal and
binding as among the old settlers, and who still sometimes
583 marry young and before the new family has any assured means
[563] of support. But the dowry system is said to be spreading among
[626] them too; and the disdain (mingled perhaps with a certain
envy) with which the old settlers speak of the refugees' irre-
sponsible marriages makes it clear that the strongest sort of so-
cial pressure is at work to prevent such occurrences.

[168] Apparently the people of Nea Eleftherohori are making use of an old custom, the dowry, to regulate population growth. Quite consciously and deliberately, they seek to keep their numbers within the limits imposed by their economic position; or, to put it the other way around, the villagers are determined not to sink into poverty, or to allow their children to do so; and by postponing marriages they know they can avoid the disaster of having too many mouths to feed.

163 The birth records of the village show what has been accom-
168 plished in this direction. Before 1939 the number of births
● 621 annually recorded never sank below 42, and went as high as 77

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in 1933. Since the war the number of recorded births has never 163
exceeded 19, and sank as low as 11 in 1953. Deaths have declined 168
also, but not as sharply, so that the natural increase of 621
the village population in the early 1950's ranged from 6 to 12
persons a year instead of the 30 to 40 a year of the early 1930's.
This decrease is the more striking since the total population of [162]
the village grew from something like 450 at the time the basic
distribution of land was made in 1927 to 875 in 1956.

Two defects are obvious in the adjustment which the people 178x
of Nea Eleftherohori are making to their straitened circumstances. 873
In the first place, there is no certainty that the boys
pursuing a secondary school education will be able to find jobs 464
when their training is completed. In 1956, there were three or
four graduates of the gymnasium living in the village, waiting
for something to turn up. One of them was working as a laborer
on a road gang – a fate considered a terrible indignity to an
educated man, even by his peasant relatives. But I was told that [647]
so far, "sooner or later," everyone who had finished the gymnasium
course had been able to get a job in town, usually in
the government civil service; and the parents who were sending
their boys to school seemed to have no serious doubts that in
due course their sons, too, might find a government desk to sit
behind. If their hopes should be betrayed, then of course the
whole campaign for maintaining family standards of living will
be in danger of breaking down. Bitter disillusionment and discontent
may then gain ground, especially among the educated
young men. This is a real danger, for even a civil service as [647]
capacious as that of Greece cannot absorb indefinitely the gymnasium
graduates of many villages like Nea Eleftherohori; and,
of course, the gymnasium training does not prepare the boys for
anything but white-collar work.

The second defect is psychological. Long postponement of 178x
marriage through the dowry represents a drastic alteration 582
583

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x178 582 583 of older peasant customs. The dowry has always been a part of marriage customs in Greece, but it used to be relatively small and easily within the means of the average family. Moreover, not to marry off one's daughters at a rather early age – before twenty-two or so – was regarded as a disgrace. It was felt that something must be wrong, either with the girl or with her parents; that she was running a grave risk of immorality and consequent loss of reputation; and that the parents were delinquent in their duty if they failed to marry her off in the bloom of her youth. Because the new customs run contrary to these older attitudes, a very special tension exists among the farmers of Nea Eleftherohori. They feel it is wrong that their young people cannot marry when they should; they feel even more strongly that marriages must wait until the means of livelihood are assured. This requires the new dowry and land inheritance pattern. But no one is happy with the way the system has worked out, particularly the young people themselves, who see a long and dreary time of waiting ahead before they can hope to start families of their own.

x178 369 This discontent is compounded by the feeling, which seems very strong in the village, that people in the towns have the best of everything: less work, more income; less boredom, more excitement. City standards of dress and manners have made extraordinary inroads in recent years, and aspiration toward a more comfortable and less laborious life is very strong.

x178 ●621 669 433 Consequently, although by economic criteria the village is very much better off than before, and although the political tensions within the village have sunk back into insignificance, discontent is much alive and near the surface. It no longer takes political form as it did during and immediately after the war, when the Communists appealed to, and found a response among, many of the young people. As long as the majority of families in the village continue to see a path by which they

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may expect to maintain or modestly increase the standard of living they have enjoyed hitherto, it is likely that discontent will remain personal and private. As yet, hard work, saving and waiting seem to promise a solution; and with such hope present discontents seem bearable. But if some day the hopes turn out to have been in vain, then one may expect to see an active movement of political dissent and revolt appear in Nea Eleftherohori once more. 178x 621 669 433

As compared with Lofiscos, therefore, Nea Eleftherohori is a good deal farther along the path toward a new social and psychological adjustment of village life. The less spacious economic base from which Nea Eleftherohori started compelled an earlier and more energetic adoption of new agricultural techniques; the old-fashioned frame in which the peasant family and community flourished from time immemorial has largely been transformed or discarded; and city standards have come in, not so much in fact as in aspiration. 178x 621 433 369 241

PALEO CORINTHOS

Paleo Corinthos, or Old Corinth, stands on the site of the ancient city, on the isthmus between the Corinthian and Saronic gulfs. The imposing mass of Acrocorinth, crowned by extensive and well-preserved Venetian fortifications, dominates the village, whereas the ruins from classical times are comparatively inconspicuous. The modern town of Corinth lies on the shore some five miles off, and has taken over the commercial functions once centered in the ancient city. Until very recently, Old Corinth remained the mere village it had been in Turkish times. 621 [361] [172]

It is, however, a much larger village than either Lofiscos or Nea Eleftherohori. Its population was officially reckoned to be 1,530 in 1947; by 1956 the figure had grown to 1,850. This growth was only partly due to natural increase, for the village [162] [166]

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957

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621 166 had acquired sixty "heads of family," mostly migrants from hill villages in the neighborhood, during the years between 1950 and 1956. Some of these immigrants brought families with them, others married into the village, but exact figures of the number of persons who have moved into the village are not available.

Nevertheless, Old Corinth definitely exhibits the pattern of internal migration which may in time allow the hillsmen of Greece to share in the rising prosperity of the villages of the plains, for migration into the community from the hills has been in part offset by another current of migration from Old Corinth into larger urban centers – either to nearby New Corinth or to Athens, some seventy miles off. Thirty-five to forty persons moved away to these centers between 1947 and 1956, according to the village president.

245 439 The reason for this mobility is that Old Corinth has become prosperous as never before. For centuries the agriculture of the community has centered upon currants; and since the seventeenth century the major market for this crop has been in England. Commercial agriculture is therefore no novelty, but the prosperity of the village has long been heavily at the mercy of the English market, and, more recently, access to this market has depended largely upon the Australian currant crop. To cultivate, pick, dry and sort currants is a labor-consuming task; and the Australian labor shortage in the postwar years proved a remarkable blessing for Corinth. Since 1954, when devaluation of the drachma cleared the way for export, currant prices have been good. [436]

241 474 433 × 178 This is only a small part of Corinth's good fortune. Owing largely to unusually wise and energetic leadership on the part of the village president, who has enjoyed a unique standing in the community, the two cooperatives which were organized before the war and were bankrupted during it were re-established by 1952.

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higher than wages for unskilled labor in Athens. It is these wage 241
rates, of course, that have attracted new settlers from the hills; 464
but the fact that such labor is seasonal, lasting for only about 465
four months in the year, means that families depending entirely
on wage work are often in very hard straits.

The unparalleled prosperity that the years since 1953 have 178x
brought to the farmers of Corinth has been accompanied by 463
the development of a number of nonagricultural occupations
within the village. Several new stores and two new coffee [366]
houses have come into existence as well as the fancy restaurant
for tourists. A number of persons also make a living as tourist [485]
guides. The richest men in the village, however, are merchants [438]
who have organized the delivery of tomatoes and other vegetables
to the Athens market; they employ truck drivers, not all [494]
of whom live in the village. The two cooperatives employ, between [474]
them, a full-time, professionally trained secretary. The
museum has a small staff of caretakers and curators. The village [871]
school had 210 pupils in 1956 and employed three teachers.
A priest officiates in a handsome new church, which the
villagers have built out of their own resources. Old Corinth, in 621 ●
other words, is developing into a small town, and ceasing to be 178x
a mere village. If the plan, only talked about in 1956, for establishing
a small canning factory to preserve tomatoes is ever
realized, the transition to a town status will become definite.

Nevertheless, from one point of view, the community has so
far remained thoroughly traditional in its social organization.
The substantial farmers of Old Corinth continue to adhere to
age-old patterns of family life. When it comes time for their [583]
children to marry, the daughters are dowered, partly with
money and partly with a share of crop land, vineyard and olive [428]
grove; and sons, similarly, inherit their portion of the parental
farm. Clearly, if there are more than two children – and this is
almost universally the case – the new generation will have to

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621
x178 face life on a smaller piece of land; but this problem does not
seem especially acute to the larger farmers. An interesting
[428] indicator of this fact is that in 1956 only thirty boys from the village
[873] attended the gymnasium in New Corinth close by — a
smaller number than Nea Eleftherohori was sending to a considerably
more distant school, though the population of Old
Corinth is nearly three times as great as that of the Macedonian
[433] village. As a matter of fact, the recent increases in the yield
from Old Corinth's land have been so great that a new family
[571] can face life with equanimity, even owning only half as much
land as their parents possessed.

621 For the landless segment of the population, and for those
x178 who own only a tiny plot insufficient to maintain a family anyway,
571 the problem is quite different. Here the major consideration
433 is not land but wages; and as long as there is work, and
wages are comparatively good, the new generation can start off
with little or nothing but a strong back and willing hands, and
[582] hope to make out about as well as their fathers have done. For
them also, there is no overwhelming pressure to postpone marriage
in order to keep up a standard of living.

621 As a result, the population statistics of Old Corinth do not
163 show nearly so drastic a change from the prewar years as is
165 evident in Nea Eleftherohori. Yet the birth rate has dropped in
Old Corinth also. In the 1930's (when the population of the
village was, of course, a good deal smaller) recorded births
ranged between 58 and 46 each year. Since 1947 the range has
been from 46 to 33. This change, however, has been nearly offset
by a parallel drop in the death rate. Before the war, deaths
averaged close to 30 each year; since 1947 the average has been
[744] a little over 12. The drop has mainly been due to the elimination
of malaria through DDT; whereas Old Corinth was formerly
one of the many places in Greece badly afflicted by that
disease, there was no malaria in 1956.

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Particularly fortunate conditions in Old Corinth – tourism, 178x
irrigation, the proximity to the Athens market, and the effective 621 ●
leadership of the village president – have permitted the villagers 511
to maintain their old family customs almost unchanged, and in spite of the rapid growth of population which such customs entail, they have not had to sacrifice their standard of living. Instead, living conditions have improved, with electricity, tractors and the like.

This is a situation very rare in Greece. It makes Old Corinth the happiest village I visited, a community at peace with itself and with the world, mildly surprised by the prosperity that has descended upon it, and generally well content with the way things are going. The contrast is strong with the internal condition 621
of the village in 1947, when, like Nea Eleftherohori, the 578
community was sharply divided between left and right. In 1947, 565
indeed, the bitterness between the two political parties was far deeper than in Nea Eleftherohori, for in Old Corinth the political lines were drawn, more or less exactly, between farmers and landless men, that is, between buyers and sellers of labor. Two [669]
particularly squalid "political" murders occurred within the village in the last days of the German occupation; and the Communist-inspired regime, which lasted for a few months in 1944, aroused strong revulsion among the substantial farmers. These memories now seem almost forgotten, though the sense of solidarity between rich and poor in Old Corinth is by no means so strong as the community feeling among the villagers of Nea Eleftherohori, where everybody is nearly equal economically.

The inequalities in landholding, and the existence of a fairly numerous landless class in the village, certainly constitute a potential source of trouble. If currant and tomato prices should fall, or if more migrants from the hills should come to the village and push wages down by competing for jobs in the fields, the existing harmony and general satisfaction could easily

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● 621 break down. The more elaborate social stratification and intri-
578 cate economic integration which the development from simple
565 village into small town involves carries with it a special vulnerability: vulnerability to fluctuations in distant markets, and vulnerability to social stresses within the community itself. This is perhaps the price Old Corinth has to pay for its remarkable economic progress in recent years.

x178 This progress may remind us that there is another sense in
621 which the social structure of Old Corinth shows itself far more
556 flexible and hospitable to innovation than the other villages described. For while family and marriage customs have not undergone important modification, the occupational patterns of the community have shown important changes; and in at least one instance a landless and once very poor man has risen to a position of wealth and importance by becoming a successful merchant. Old Corinth has given far more scope to individual and cooperative enterprise than either Lofiscos or Nea Eleftherohori. Yet this development, too, is in line with old Greek tradition. The self-made man, particularly the self-made merchant or storekeeper, rising to wealth and respectability by virtue of his mother wit and shrewdness in buying and selling, has been a prominent figure in Greek society for at least two centuries; and it has always been the marginal man in the village social hierarchy – the man who has had no land to keep him busy – who has naturally gravitated to such occupations when opportunity has opened. Innovation in Old Corinth has thus taken traditional forms.

x178 Since 1912, rural Greece has been fundamentally divided be-
184 tween villages like Old Corinth, which can look back to genera-
423 tions of substantially undisturbed evolution, and those villages
621 where within recent memory radical governmental intervention entirely transformed earlier landholding patterns. The division is geographical. In Old Greece, meaning Greece within the

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boundaries that existed before 1881, village life has not suffered 178 x
drastic upheaval since 1821, if then. Changes have come slowly 184
and by evolution. The case is far otherwise in New Greece – 423
Thessaly, Macedonia, Epirus and Thrace. There the violent 621
elimination of Turkish landlords and peasants through war was followed by governmental creation of egalitarian peasant communities. This amounted to an agrarian revolution from above, in some cases fully satisfying the peasants – as in Lofiscos – but often failing to do so, as in Nea Eleftherohori.

The slower evolution of village life in Old Greece has meant, 178 x
at least until the present, the preservation of a fairly firm cake 184
of custom, governing the daily lives of the inhabitants. In this 621
respect, Old Corinth is quite typical. Consequently, in spite of 669
the contrast between rich peasant and landless laborer, the social stratification within these peasant communities has not [565]
bred so many revolutionists as have been bred by the hardships of life in an equality of poverty, characteristic of many villages in the north. Conservatism, royalism, traditionalism have all centered in the south; while radicalism, republicanism, restlessness and revolution have found their strongest expression in the north.

Yet while these generalizations are true, I must hasten to add that the villages of the plains never were the main centers of political revolt. Too many had too much to lose in such communities. Rather it was in the hill villages, where life was harder and the prospect of maintaining a given standard of life was dimmer, that revolution found its most congenial ground. Since the latter part of the eighteenth century, if not before, this has been the really vulnerable point in Greek society, the source of major disturbance and of recurrent civil violence. In the hills, even more than in the plains, the future stability or instability of Greek society is likely to be decided in time to come, as it has in times past. Let us therefore leave the plains and turn to the hills.

Hill Villages

KOTTA

621 Kotta is situated in the far northwestern corner of Greece,
[361] about five miles from the Albanian border, and not more than
fifteen miles from the point where Yugoslavia, Albania and
[133] Greece adjoin. Flowing past the village is a small stream which
in due course descends to join the Aliakmon River. The valley
[311] slopes are steep, and the villagers possess only 500 stremmata
(125 acres) of arable soil. Much of this is thin patches on the
hillsides; of good bottom land the community has less than ten
acres.

722 When I visited the village in 1947, the inhabitants were starv-
669 ing. Seemingly innumerable children peeped out from every
[731] house, many of them showing bloated bellies beneath motley
rags that served as clothing but scarcely covered their naked-
ness. The village was then in the hands of the guerrillas, who
had stationed a detachment of fifteen boys (the eldest was not
[191] more than eighteen) in the community. The ordinary speech
was Slavic, and at least some of the villagers felt that it would
[619] be better for them if their village belonged to Yugoslav Mace-
donia. Macedonian national feeling may have played some part
in this attitude, but probably the major determinant was the
knowledge that conditions across the border were not quite so
hard as those they faced in Greece.

The people of Kotta were, indeed, living under war condi-
[491] tions. The Greek army had blocked the main road between
Florina and Kastoria, which runs not far from the village site,
and no vehicles could pass without special permits; men could
still get through on foot by taking off across open country, but
[464] there was little incentive to do so. Work could not be found
down in the plains, and a man from Kotta, with the trace of a
Slavic accent in his Greek, was courting arrest or a beating if he

Kotta

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ventured into territory controlled by the Greek army or police. 722
Resentment against the Greek authorities was widespread, although 669
one man in the village, in speaking to me privately, [464]
made it clear that he at least did not like to contribute to the
upkeep of the guerrilla garrison that controlled the village.

The population of the village was 630 persons, of whom over 621
200 were under fifteen years of age. Thus there was about one 433
fifth of an acre of agricultural land per head, land that was miserably
poor to begin with. Clearly the village could not live on [162]
its agriculture; and even when it had been safe to graze sheep [511]
on the barren mountain slopes, as it was not in 1947, the village
still could not begin to maintain itself on local resources. The
villagers calculated that they could produce food for about four
months in the year; the deficit had to be made good outside.

In prewar years two means had been found to make ends
meet. The men of the village were accomplished masons, and [463]
traveled far and wide over Greece seeking work as builders. In [333]
addition, they found work in various sorts of heavy construction [464]
– road building, irrigation works and the like. But in 1947
such jobs were not to be had, at least not by men with a Slavic
accent.

The second, and perhaps more important, resource was remittances 621
from abroad. The village had begun to send men overseas, 433
mainly to Canada and Australia, even before the first 457
world war. During the interwar years, the migration had continued 167
despite growing barriers to free movement. In Toronto,
Canada, and in Sydney, Australia, natives of Kotta had founded
regular little colonies, and the members of these emigrant
groups, all of whom were related to one another in some degree,
helped to finance the continued emigration. Each family expected
to send at least one son overseas, and that son was in
turn expected to send back enough of his earnings to keep his
parents fed and clothed, and to help out his brothers and sisters
who stayed home.

Kotta

[Hill Villages]

000
722 who stayed home. When the Greek army interrupted communi-
511 cation with the outside world this vital supply of cash was cut
[669] off. In 1947, therefore, the villagers were trying to spread out
[457] four months' food over the twelve months of the year.

Their diet was cornbread and little else. Nearly all of their
[262] sheep, whose milk had once helped to correct the deficiencies of
a maize diet, had been slaughtered during the occupation; and
[164] the prevalence of skin diseases and a certain lassitude in their
movements clearly indicated that malnutrition was added to
[263] undernourishment. They missed salt more acutely than any-
thing else. There had been none in the village for several weeks
when I was there.

669 Kotta remained in guerrilla hands until August 1949. It was
722 luckier than some of its neighboring communities inasmuch as
621 there was no fighting in the immediate environs, so that the
161 houses of the village escaped without more than casual damage.
But the villagers could not escape from famine, nor from disease that naturally followed in the wake of prolonged and dras-
[162] tic undernourishment. When I returned in 1956, the population
of the village had shrunk to 188, less than one third of what it had been in 1947. The average number of persons per family had declined to 2.4, whereas in 1947 families with fewer than three children were a rarity and five or six children per family was closer to the average.

About one hundred of the former inhabitants of the village were simply missing. They had gone off, in desperation, looking for food or safety and had not come back. Most, presumably, had died or been killed. In addition, the village priest said that about fifty of the village men were known to have been killed while serving with the guerrillas; and five families had moved west across the Albanian frontier in 1949 when the guerrilla re-
669 treat took place. But the largest single factor in the decline of
728 population was the removal of the village children by the guer-
621
161

Kotta

[Hill Villages]

rillas. A total of 225 children, between the ages of two and 669
twelve, had been taken north in the early stages of the war, and 728
only three had returned. A few letters had come from some of 621
them, originating in places as remote as Turkestan, Poland and 161
Czechoslovakia; but most had not been heard from, and no one
in the village knew whether they were alive or dead.

The evacuation of the village children may well have been
conceived by the guerrilla authorities as a humanitarian measure.
Considering the state of the village as I saw it in 1947, such
an interpretation seems quite plausible. This was not the way
the bereft parents viewed the matter, however. They gave no
very coherent explanation of why the children were taken, but
the abduction was remembered in 1956 as the greatest crime
the guerrillas committed. Not a few parents have been left [842]
childless, and this, by traditional village standards, is a bitter
disaster. Who will look after them in their old age?

Still another factor in the drastic depopulation of Kotta has 621
been emigration. As soon as communications with the outside 161
world became possible again, relatives rallied round in Toronto 167
and Sydney, and helped a total of fifty-six persons to emigrate. 457
The process is still going on. When I visited the village in 1956,
a young man and his mother were on the verge of departure for
Australia, where they would join cousins who were financing
the voyage.

Yet in spite of the sorrows which have visited every family in 727
the village, and in spite of the terrible suffering all have been 621
through, the spirit of the village in 1956 seemed amazingly re- 511
laxed and calm – almost happy. The survivors gave the impres-
sion of being profoundly surprised to find themselves still alive.
But what is more important, everyone now has enough to eat. [457]
The village land can feed the population; there is now no need
to look for work outside; and remittances from abroad permit
some families to indulge in small luxuries – kerosene lamps, for
example.

Kotta

[Hill Villages]

727 example. I even saw two fine Swiss watches on the wrists of
621 young men dressed in homespun.

[571] In the immediate postwar period, Kotta benefited somewhat
from government help. The villagers were given glass to repair
[657] the windows of their houses, and some lumber for doors and
window frames, so that their houses are in better repair today
[491] than in 1947. In 1954 a stout stone bridge was built across the
stream with government funds, and the villagers made a rude
road to connect Kotta with the outside world. Vehicles can
therefore come into the village, though few come, since the villagers
have little need of anything from beyond their own small
valley.

[241] Their agriculture is much the same as before, with corn almost
the sole crop. The village flock of sheep is slowly growing
[233] back to prewar proportions, thanks in part to the government's
having given each family four sheep as a start. The
[492] village also has a few cattle – another government gift – which
not only yield milk but are harnessed to the plows as well. All
this represents a return to familiar patterns.

x 178 The only agricultural innovation that has so far come to Kotta
241 is the experimental sowing of alfalfa on one of the good acres
233 of bottom land. This measure was recommended to the village
by a government extension agent in the hope of remedying one
[242] of the crying weaknesses of its traditional economy – the lack
of winter fodder for animals. Leaves cut from trees and dried
cornstalks have been normal winter fare for cattle and sheep;
and since the village stands more than two thousand feet above
sea level, the winter is both long and severe. As a result the animals
emerge thin and weak from the winter months. Yet the
villagers are not altogether convinced that the new crop is
worth while. Alfalfa was planted for the first time in 1955, and
while it did help to feed the cattle, the new crop occupied one
of the best pieces of bottom land the village possesses, where

Kotta

[Hill Villages]

corn for human food grows better than in almost any other spot. 178x
To replace human with animal food on such land is a considerable 241
sacrifice – too much of a sacrifice if the population of the 233
village should once again begin to grow.

As things are today, the villagers lead a very leisurely life. 669
Work in the fields takes at most three months of the year. There 621
is no need of outside work, and no one attempts to find it. For
nine months of the year, consequently, the men have plenty of [241]
time on their hands. They use it in sitting around the village and [517]
talking. Their talk is easy and friendly. Men who fought on opposite sides in the guerrilla war could joke about it without any trace of bitterness. As a matter of fact, many of the survivors had fought on both sides, first with the guerrillas and then with the Greek army. Those who stayed with the guerrillas were killed, or else disappeared into Albania. Except for the loss of their children, there seems no inclination to blame the guerrillas for what happened; nor is there any perceptible hostility against the Greek government. The general feeling about the war is that it was all an absurd nightmare in which the villagers themselves were no more than victims, rather than
participants. As Slavs, the villagers cannot easily share Greek [619]
nationalism, and Communist ideas and ideals seem to have left no impression upon them. Presumably, the few who took those ideas seriously departed with the retreating guerrilla army. For those who remain, the vision of Sydney or Toronto means far more than any ideological paradise.

One of the most surprising changes in Kotta is the prevalence 621
of Greek as the normal and natural speech, for communication 178x
among the villagers themselves as well as with strangers. "We 197
are all Greek now," one of the young men said, and explained
that both in the guerrilla and in the regular army, the language [669]
and sentiment had been Greek. Only the old people of the village [191]
speak Slav any more, he said. Even more to the point, the
[619]

Kotta

[Hill Villages]

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x 178 villagers know that they are now much better off than the people in Yugoslav Macedonia, with whom they so recently felt a [197] degree of kinship.

[619] Since 1954 no representative of the Greek government has [631] lived in the village. An army detachment, which had been there from 1949, departed in 1954, leaving patriotic slogans on the walls of the buildings used as barracks. No gendarmes came to replace the soldiers. Hence the village has been left very largely to its own devices. The inhabitants like it that way. As is true [651] of all villages in Greece, the government no longer tries to collect direct taxes from Kotta (as it did before the war), but contents itself with a 2 per cent sales tax on products sold in town markets. This, for Kotta, amounts to paying almost no taxes at all, for the inhabitants sell almost nothing. This, too, pleases the villagers.

Kotta, therefore, is a community in which thoroughly old-[727] fashioned attitudes prevail. In spite of the harrowing guerrilla war – or rather because of it – life has resumed its old, familiar channels; and since everyone now has enough to eat without having to venture into the outside world, the villagers seem well content to settle down within their nearly self-sufficient valley and let the world go by.

621 The real question for the future is whether or not the village
161 will proceed once again to breed children on the reckless scale
x 178 that prevailed before. The age structure of the surviving population is altogether anomalous, the removal of all children be-[728] tween the ages of two and fourteen in 1948 having left a great gap. Moreover, military losses and emigration overseas mainly affected young men and women of the next older age groups. The potentially childbearing population has therefore been drastically depleted, so much so that out of a total of seventy-[885] seven families in 1956, the village contained only four or five couples of childbearing age. (One must bear in mind that in a

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957

EH1 Greece EH1

Kotta

[Hill Villages]

community where very early marriages have been the rule, a 621
woman of thirty or thirty-five is already old.) Between 1952 161
and 1956 there were only four marriages in the village, twelve 178x
births, sixteen deaths. Under the circumstances, it seems certain [885]
that the population will decrease still further in the immediate future.

Yet even four or five families could turn out to be quite enough to repopulate the village, if the old patterns of early marriage and numerous children prevail. Indeed, the close blood relationships of all the villagers suggests that in times past the community may well have contained only a handful of families from whom hundreds (or, counting those overseas, thousands) in due course descended. Thanks to the depopulation brought by the guerrilla war, the traditional life of Kotta has become easy once again, and if the young people accept the old ways, and do not allow the glitter of urban life overseas, reflected in the letters and money orders sent back by friends and relatives, to change their outlook, then it seems fairly certain that within a decade or less the depopulation of the village will come to a halt, and rapid growth in numbers will begin once more. If so, after something like thirty or forty years Kotta will probably be back in the impossible position of 1947.

This cycle is, I believe, the key to much Balkan history. The 175
peasant family system was adjusted, from age-old antiquity, to 161
supply large numbers of children, most of whom died from violence 669
or disease before attaining adulthood. With the more or less effective pacification of the countryside in the last couple of centuries, together with the elimination of some epidemic diseases and the control of others, this age-old balance was thrown out of kilter, so that the peasant population began (as early as the mid-eighteenth century) to run far ahead of the development of resources that might sustain it.

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957

EH1 Greece EH1

Kotta

[Hill Villages]

175 669 619 In politics, the result was a series of risings against the lords of the plains, which centered in the marginal hill villages. Until 1912, the lords of the Macedonian plains were of course Turks, and Greek nationalism (like other Balkan nationalisms) was therefore able with perfect propriety to combine territorial expansion with social revolution, and pit hill against plain in the name of individual freedom and national self-determination. The first clear example of this phenomenon was the Greek War of Independence of 1821–30. The long series of revolts and irregular wars of the nineteenth century in the European dominions of the Ottoman Empire continued the process; and the guerrilla movements in Yugoslavia, Albania and Greece during (and in Greece after) the second world war were only its latest manifestations. In this most recent period, however, the lords of the plains were not Turks any longer, and were not even landlords. Instead they were fellow peasants and co-nationals. The difference was cloaked during World War II by the fact that Germans and Italians were in the plains, and to attack them served to justify the far more genuine assault upon the plains villages – from which, after all, the major food supply of the guerrilla forces had to come. Only in Greece, between 1946 and 1949, did the divergence between nationalism and social revolution become clear; and even in that instance, as pointed out above, most guerrillas felt themselves to be Greek patriots as well.

621 161 433 Kotta's wartime experience shows dramatically how such warfare brought its own solution to the problem of overpopulation – cruel, blind, bloody, but effective. Depopulation, such as Kotta suffered, certainly sufficed to solve for a generation or so the problem of too many mouths and not enough land. When the crisis passed, survivors could settle back to a more or less satisfactory life again, until their growing numbers should once more make the traditional style of life impossible within the

Kotta

[Hill Villages]

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limits of the hill valleys. In times past, Balkan hillsmen then had to seek sustenance from the plains, either by peaceful labor or by armed forays.

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As far as Kotta and villages like it are concerned, it now seems to me an open question whether the old cycle will repeat itself again or whether new standards of expectation and conduct will make sufficient inroads upon the traditional peasant family system to check early marriage and rapid multiplication of numbers. Through overseas emigration, the modern city has made its mark on Kotta. All but a few young people want to leave, and many have done so. At the same time, the handful who remain appear to be conforming to the old ways. Perhaps the critical turn will come as their children grow up; for if the rising generation elects to look beyond the confines of the village – and if the possibilities of migration, either within Greece or overseas, exist – then, perhaps, as the population of the village begins to press once again upon the limits of local production, the young people may decline to continue the old, economically suicidal pattern, and will instead seek their fortunes far afield, and refuse to marry into hopeless poverty at home. It depends more than anything else, perhaps, upon the degree of communication that may come to exist between the outside world and the villagers. In 1956 these contacts were limited. Newspapers came seldom; vehicles rarely. But the village did [20] possess a radio that brought daily news from Athens; and emigrants' letters were perhaps the most important of all the channels of contact with the great world beyond the valley in which Kotta nestles.

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Survivors of the older generation – those who have lost their children to the guerrillas – seem to have no doubts or reservations in wishing to see more and more children about again. The priest complained of how empty and joyless the village was without the throngs of children he knew before. He deeply

Kotta

[Hill Villages]

● 621 | regretted the loss of five of his own whom the guerrillas had
161 | taken. Yet he was fortunate in having one child still with him,
842 a girl who was too young to leave her mother when the guerrillas
took the older children. As for the attitudes of the younger generation in the village, I could not satisfy myself. In the presence of their elders, they generally kept quiet, and certainly refrained from any overt dissent. Whether they, too, shared the traditional view that the more children one has the better off one is (assured thereby of God's blessing and of sustenance in old age), I could not tell.

CHERASIA

621 Cherasia is a village in Thessaly near the base of Mount
361 Pelion, some six air miles from Volos, the fourth city of Greece.
[491] Along the winding road, however, it lies about twelve miles
from Volos; and before 1952 the only road connection with the
village required a detour of about twenty-four miles around the
[173] mountain. The community is an old one. Local tradition holds
that it was founded 680 years ago. Until the Germans destroyed
[433] the "upper" village in 1943, the community led a semi-migratory
[233] life, spending the summer months high up the mountain
where a natural spring supplied water, and coming down to the foot of the mountain only in winter, when the flocks could pasture on the stubble of other villages' grain fields. The villagers looked upon the upper village as their real home, the lower one as only a temporary shelter.

x178 The traditional occupations of the village were sheepherding
433 and charcoal burning. Once upon a time, sixty or seventy years
233 ago, the main support of the community may well have been
314 sheep, pastured on the rough mountain in summer, and on grain
[438] stubble in the winter. Then, by degrees, charcoal burning and
woodcutting became more important. Two factors presumably

[Hill Villages]

217 families managed to escape official pressures and stayed in
166 Volos, I was told, even though the records showed them back
[727] in the village. Similarly, a trickle of migration from the village
into Volos since 1950 has gone unrecorded. With every sort of
bureaucratic obstacle put in the way of legal transfer of residence from Cherasia to Volos, most of those who depart from
the village simply neglect red tape and leave their names registered in Cherasia. They do so not by choice, since people
[745] officially registered as living in a village like Cherasia cannot claim
unemployment benefits in Volos, and if they find no work, must either starve, rely upon relatives, or return to their village until better times offer a new start in town. This, of course, is the main reason why transfer of residence is made so difficult; the government could not afford to pay unemployment benefits to all the hungry men from the hills who might swarm into town if they could secure such payments.

162 Nevertheless, the villagers all agreed that more people were
621 living in Cherasia in 1956 than had lived there before the war.
A mean between conflicting estimates of the population came
[433] out close to 500 for 1956, and about 430 for 1940. The villagers
reckon that their own local production supplies food for only
[432] two months in the year. The rest has to be bought with money
earned by selling wood and charcoal, together with an occasional lamb from their flock.

621 Records of births and deaths were also in confusion, partly
217 because children born in Volos to parents registered in Cherasia
162 are supposed to be, but are not always in fact, entered in the
[743 village records. Partly, too, confusion arises from the custom of
844] sending pregnant women to the Volos hospitals to give birth — a new departure in village custom, resulting from the wartime experience of living in the town, and facilitated by the existence of the new road. These children, too, sometimes escape the village registers, or are entered late. For what the figures may be

[Hill Villages]

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worth, however, the records showed 45 births since 1951 as 217
against 18 deaths, and everything I heard and observed in the 621 ●
village pointed to a very high rate of natural increase.

Marriages occur early. When nearly everyone lacks land that 178x
is worth much of anything, there is no tendency to wait until 582
the new family can be assured a landed inheritance. One young [583]
man said, somewhat cynically: "What I had when I married was a donkey, an axe and a strong back. I still have all three, and three children as well." The donkey, I gathered, was his wife's contribution to the new household; the axe and the back, his own. This, it seems, is more or less normal in the village; and one can easily understand how a desire to escape the nagging poverty of the parental household would lead young men and girls into early marriage, in order at least to enjoy personal independence and the satisfactions of the marriage bed. Even though the rest of their traditional style of life seems on the verge of ruin, this still is possible. Feeling a general despair of ever being able to live decently, feeling also a certain reckless defiance of all forms of authority – including parental authority – there seems to persons such as the young man who spoke to me no reason not to marry as soon as one can find a partner.

In spite of the rebellious mood prevailing in Cherasia, the 621
officials of the village in 1956, although supposedly elected, 666
represented the extreme right. The president and secretary
were both members of the "rich" families, possessing compara- 669
tively broad acres, and both were very emphatic and voluble 565
in asserting that the only way to deal with Communists was to 578
use force. Indeed, they said that peace could come to Cherasia and to Greece only when Russia was blown up by American atom bombs. How they were elected, I do not know, but I am certain the election was not a free one. Suspicion and thinly veiled hostility dominated the relation between the villagers and their official leaders.

[Hill Villages]

621 669 727 Ten men in the village had come back after serving with the guerrillas, and were kept under informal surveillance. Some forty others had not returned, and most of these were presumed dead. Thirteen who had retreated behind the iron curtain in 1949 had, however, sent letters to their relatives. The village president, who provided these statistics, was obviously well informed on these matters and clearly believed that a major part of his duties was to keep a close watch upon leftists or suspected leftists.

166 621 433 [669] Here, then, is a village scarcely better off than it was in 1947. In spite of the expenditure of tens of thousands of dollars, derived indirectly from American aid – indeed, *because* of such expenditure – the acute and untenable overcrowding of very poor land continues; and with it the political tensions of 1946–49 seethe, just beneath the surface. The only solution for Cherasia which seems to make any sense is to remove two thirds or more of the present population, and find land or work for them elsewhere. This has not been attempted; official policy has done just the opposite by placing barriers in the way of migration from the community.

[464] Unfortunately, Volos, the natural outlet for the surplus population of Cherasia, was itself undergoing a first-class economic crisis in 1956.[4] The port, which is the economic heart of the

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[731] [653] [4] An earthquake which damaged many buildings in Volos rather badly in 1954 was, under the circumstances, a perverse blessing to many of the poorer families of the town. Repair and reconstruction got under way quickly, thanks to a special grant from the national budget (and assisted by a special American aid appropriation of $7 million for the purpose). This gave temporary work to many, but by 1956 this extraordinary source [288] of employment had dwindled. At the same time, a large textile plant in the city went on part time, and discharged a large proportion of its working force, as a result of a general crisis in the Greek textile trade. Consequently, Volos was, like Cherasia, unusually clean and tidy in 1956, and unusually depressed.

Cherasia

[Hill Villages]

city, was almost idle, so that serious unemployment was en- 166
demic in Volos, thus effectively blocking the easiest and most 621
immediate escape for the hillsmen of Cherasia. In the Thes- 433
salian plain, villages like Lofiscos have not developed their agri- 464
culture to a level of intensity that would offer seasonal employment on a significant scale. Hence, for the time being the people of Cherasia are caught in a net scarcely of their own devising. At the same time they are stubbornly and angrily doing little
or nothing to help themselves. It is not a hopeful situation, and [669]
if the general political climate of Greece should change, another guerrilla band could very likely be recruited from Cherasia without difficulty and at a moment's notice.

KARDAMILI

Kardamili lies on the sea, and can thus be described as a hill 621
village only by looking inland, where high and barren hillsides [361]
rise abruptly from the coast, with only a small stream and a
miniature delta to explain the location of the community. It is [133]
situated on the west coast of the central peninsula of the southern Peloponnese. Just to the south lies the wild and desolate country of Mani, a region where tribal organization and blood feud lasted into the twentieth century.

Kardamili raises a little wheat in the stream delta, but its 621
major crop is olives. The rocky hillsides are covered with trees, 433
skillfully planted in crevices and pockets of soil, many of which
have been created artificially by terracing. The villagers reckon [241]
that they produce enough wheat to supply the community for
about four months in the year; the rest has to be imported with [438]
money gained through the sale of olive oil.

Before the war, Kardamili added to its strictly agricultural [366]
resources by acting as a commercial center for a number of in- [438]
land villages. They, too, exported olive oil, together with a few [491]

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Kardamili

[Hill Villages]

621

433 animals; and before roads were built, these villages brought
366 their surplus on donkey-back (or on the hoof) to Kardamili,
438 where it was put on board a small ship, and carried either to
Athens or to Kalamata, the local metropolis, some thirty-five
491 miles away on the rich Messenian plain. In addition, an oil-pressing
258 plant was constructed in 1929 in Kardamili which employed
464 as many as a hundred persons at the height of the season.
Even when there were no olives to press, the plant kept
388 open the year around by making soap and other products.

This was the basis upon which about 750 people were able
to make a living in the village before the war. In recent years,
however, the village has not prospered. The oil factory closed
258 down permanently in 1940, depriving the village of what had
491 been one of its most important resources. After the war, a new
road, built in 1949–50, destroyed the importance of the port.
438 Instead of bringing their olives to Kardamili on donkey-back
and selling them there, the peasants of the hinterland loaded
their produce directly onto trucks bound for Kalamata or
Athens.

The new system was an obvious improvement on older methods
of transport and marketing; but it meant that Kardamili,
which for a few years between the wars had struggled toward
becoming a miniature town, was compelled to sink back to a
621 purely village status. One manifestation of this change is a decrease
in population. In 1940, the village had about 750 inhabitants;
669 in 1956 the population totaled only 512. War losses were
722 insignificant, although guerrillas did kill two persons from the
161 village. The whole community was forcibly evacuated to Kalamata
162 in 1949 to prevent its exploitation by guerrilla bands that
ranged even this far south. The evacuation was perhaps scarcely
justified, however, since the guerrillas never again came near,
and when the villagers returned in 1950 they found their houses
intact.

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Kardamili

[Hill Villages]

They came back to a village whose earlier means of livelihood 621
was being undermined by new roads. As this fact became 166
clear, emigration from the village commenced. Altogether, 464
something like two hundred persons left the village between 433
1950 and 1956. Only one family went overseas, to Australia. The [161]
rest went either to Kalamata or to Athens. Among those who
have remained in the village, a considerable number have undertaken [167]
seasonal migration to the Messenian plain in order to
seek work with which to supplement the meager income from
their olive trees in the village. The biggest single source of employment [243]
which has opened up in recent years is work in rice
fields, developed in former salt marshes on the very edge of the [311]
Messenian plain. For the villagers of Kardamili these fields in
Messenia have meant work and wages. Between eighty and
ninety persons, both men and women, leave the village each
year to help cultivate the rice fields. While working, they live [342]
in shanties or even out of doors, and return to their homes in
Kardamili when work stops, or when something needs to be
done on their own land.

Within the village there are variations in wealth, but no family 621
has so much land as to need to hire labor. Indeed, the village 241
secretary told me that the richest man in the village has only
forty days' work a year on his olive trees, while nearly one third 429
of all the village families own no land at all. [556]

The only change that has come to the traditional agriculture 178x
of the community is the introduction of fertilizer, but few families 245
use it. A common opinion holds that fertilizer is bad for the
olive trees, and makes them short-lived by forcing an unnatural [241]
proliferation of fruit. A more sophisticated farmer told me that
while the size of the fruit is increased by fertilizer, the quantity
of oil is not increased in anything like the same proportion and
its quality is lowered. Since the olive trees of this part of Greece [438]
are famous for the high quality of the oil they produce, which

Kardamili

[Hill Villages]

x 178 commands a premium price in Athens and elsewhere, the use
245 of fertilizer becomes a somewhat dubious economic advantage.

[438] The fact is, I believe, that the age-old adjustment of traditional peasant agriculture in the olive-growing regions of Greece is very nearly perfect. Certainly every scrap of potential soil is used in Kardamili, and the peasants know very well how to care for their trees. Except for chemical sprays that discourage a number of insect pests damaging to the crop, scientific agriculture has not yet devised any very important improvement upon traditional peasant methods of olive culture. But sprays were known in Kardamili before the war, and their use was resumed as soon as the chemicals became available.

x 178
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[652] In 1956 the village launched a project for bringing water down the mountain. An interest-free government loan made the enterprise possible; but, even when completed, the water pipes will not supply more than household needs, leaving a little over, perhaps, for watering gardens. Shortage of water has been the long-standing problem of the community. There was scarcely enough to drink when I was there, and each glassful was treated as something precious, since the women of the village had to carry it in jars from a trickling spring half a mile away.

x 178
621
873 Yet in spite of the stability of agricultural methods, the social system of the village, to all appearances, is beginning to change, more or less as the social system of Nea Eleftherohorí is changing. For one thing, the villagers have begun to place great hopes in education, seeing in it a means of escaping from the land. Fifteen boys from the village were enrolled in the gymnasium in Kalamata in 1956, a quite considerable number in view of the fact that they had to live away from home, and thus had to meet expenses far greater than those confronting the boys from Nea Eleftherohori. In Kardamili itself, there is a school that teaches the first two years of the standard four-year gymnasium course. This school had eighty students, five more than

Kardamili

[Hill Villages]

were enrolled in the village primary school because boys from 178x
neighboring villages were in attendance. Within Kardamili, I 621
was told, almost every boy goes through the first two years of 873
gymnasium. Even without the final two years in Kalamata there
is a chance, though not a good one, of finding a clerical job
somewhere outside.

The other aspect of the adjustment characteristic of Nea 178x
Eleftherohori – postponement of marriage through the dowry 582
system – is less advanced in Kardamili, but seems to be coming
in. Dowries are rising, I was told, and even a man who owns no 583
land himself may now ask a wife to bring him 2,000 okes of olive
oil – the equivalent of several hundred dollars. This is a far cry
from the huge sums expected in Nea Eleftherohori by a young
man who is to inherit land; but what is significant is that before
the war such demands were not being made in Kardamili. In
those days a landless man would expect no more than a nominal
dowry.

Village statistics did not show very convincingly any decrease 621
in the birth rate, however. The decrease in numbers born no 161
more than corresponded to the decline in the village population.
Moreover, the decrease in deaths was more rapid than any [744]
change in the number of births – owing, mainly, to the elimination
of malaria – so that the rate of natural increase of the population
had actually risen between 1947 and 1956. So far, it
would appear, the villagers have not felt it necessary to change
their family customs very profoundly. Migration, facilitated by
education, has sufficed to relieve intolerable conditions. The [582]
more drastic step of postponing marriage has not become generally
necessary.

In poor villages deeper into Mani, these processes have gone 178x
much further. In one that I visited only briefly, Yerolimini, I 166
was told that "no" young men are left in the village: all have
gone to seek their fortunes in Piraeus, where this village has 369

with the farmers seemed to be genuinely friendly and highly 647
effective in nearly all of the villages I visited. Here again, the 663
American aid mission was entitled to a great deal of credit, for [177]
American advisers had made special efforts to reorganize the [654]
agricultural extension service on the model of the county agricultural agents in the United States. Many of the Greek agriculturalists had been sent to study in America before receiving
their appointments. The public health agencies were another [657]
branch of the central administration in which a spirit of service
had come to prevail; and there may have been others. In general, it was the older departments of the government, and particularly those concerned with money and taxes, in which the unpleasant but traditional attitudes were most firmly and universally established.

Another administrative change, and one which produced 178
highly beneficial results in some localities at least, was the re- 631
invigoration of local government. During the war and after-
ward, until 1951, local government officials were appointed 621 ●
through the Ministry of Interior. In 1951, however, local elec- 647
tions were organized, partly at least in response to repeated 666
urging from Americans. As a result of these elections, village presidents and city mayors, together with advisory councils which assisted them in their administration, became more nearly independent of the central government, and commanded, presumably, more local confidence and support than was likely to be the case when the offices were filled by appointment from above.

The system did not always work smoothly – witness Che- 621
rasia; but my impression of the local officials whom I met in 631
1956 was on the whole a quite favorable one. Except in Che- 178
rasia, the village presidents seemed to have the full confidence of the villagers, and some of them were men of real intelligence and force of character. The president of Old Corinth would be

● 621 a distinguished man in any company. Authority seemed to rest
631 as naturally upon his shoulders as the callouses rested upon
178 his palms. This easy relation between village officers and the
people of their community had definitely not been characteristic in 1947.

621 Local government in Greece was suffering, however, from a
631 chronic and serious handicap. Local authorities lacked funds,
652 and could seldom do anything beyond routine administration
without borrowing from some agency of the central government.[1] The result of this situation was to extend greatly the real authority and influence of the central government over local affairs. Village and municipal authorities spent a great deal of time waiting in the anterooms of officials of the central government in the hope of securing money with which to carry through some local improvement.

621 Villages had always depended on the Agricultural Bank or
651 on one of the central ministries for finding money for any im-
portant project; cities and towns until 1949 had financed their
652 local expenditures mainly through excise duties imposed upon
178 goods brought into the municipality. Before that year, long
631 lines of peasant carts, waiting their turn at municipal excise
stations, were a frequent sight in the outskirts of every town. Internal tariffs were abolished in 1949, however, and the share of the cigarette tax, levied nationally, which was assigned to municipalities in lieu of these excises proved generally inadequate. Town governments were therefore in poor shape financially, and any public improvements that were made came from special grants or loans from the central government.

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[1] The municipality of Athens, for example, had been insolvent for as long as anyone cared to recall. The problem was such that in 1955 and again in 1956, the Athens Power Company threatened to cut off the supply of electricity to municipal institutions unless some of the back bills were paid.

/4 cont./

Selection of the Village 121

The author's intimate relationship with the farmers of the 621
village and his use of it as a demonstration center for village ex- [123]
tension work has led him to select it for this study. Another reason
that led the author to select it was of the uniform economy and
the uniform social stratification. Due to equal distribution of
land there were no class distinctions.

Available Data Based on Eight Years of Experience. 128

The discussions and principles discussed in Rural Social Organi-
zation, under Dr. Sanderson, are applied as far as they fit the
conditions. A careful farm survey was taken with 40 representative 125
farmers out of 120 families. These farmers were representatives [423]
due to the fact that only 6 years elapsed since the equal distribution
of land. They had the same implements and all of them had
nothing except what they got from the government. My close 123
relationship with them and the nature of my work has helped me
in my observations. /5/

The village of Megali Vrisi: Its location, geography and physical characteristics. 621

103
The village of Megali Vrisi is only 45 kilometers from the
city of Salonica. It lies in the south-central part of Macedonia. [101]
Before the refugees moved in, it was occupied by the Turks who [167]
at the arrival of the Greeks left for Turkey. Its Turkish name
was Armoutchi. Previous to this Turkish name it had a Greek
name. The foundations of the mosque that were dug by the refugees
in order to get the stones bore in Greek letters the date that it
was built and the names of the church committee. In fact many
of the names of the surrounding villages were changed quite often
at different periods by the respective people that occupied them,
either Turks, Bulgarians, Albanians or Greeks.

/8 cont./
Since the refugees settled the village changed its external 178
and internal appearance. The pond in the center of the village 361
was filled up with 1400 cubic meters of dirt. It was fenced and a 367
war memorial monument was erected in the center of it. Many
shrubs were planted /9/ and the acacia trees surround the whole [211
park. Once a bathing spot for the lazy buffalo, it has become 883]
now a rendezvous place for the youth of the village. The refugees 178
were not satisfied with the well water and through personal work [312]
brought running water to the village from the nearby hills. A
large fountain was built in the square of the village and two more
smaller ones in the neighborhoods. As soon as the water came to [103
the village, at the inauguration ceremony, the village changed 527]
its name from Armoutchi (Pear bearing) to Megali Vrisi (Big
Fountain). [342
Many of the Turkish houses were torn down and new houses 247
with better roads and aesthetic appearance were put up. The
whole village is covered with huge elm trees. The South Western 621]
part is occupied by the Thracians and the North by the Caucasians.

The Thracians are the only refugees who changed their homes 167
for four times in less than 10 years and this last one may be the 342
fifth. They are so discouraged in building big houses and leaving 722
them every time to the enemy to destroy them that they all decided 511
to erect one room houses with mud walls and ceiling made
out of reeds. The cost of the material does not exceed more than [435]
$18 to $25. One of them once told me, "I left enough big houses
to the enemy who destroyed them. This time I am going to
destroy it before he comes in." When I laughed /10/ at his last
remark, he shook his head and said. "You are too young yet to
know the Balkans." No, I think he was right. Every Thracian
family can carry everything they have on their backs. They
simplified their lives, having only those things that are the most
essential.

/10 cont./

Boundaries and Neighborhoods of the village. 621

Megali Vrisi itself falls into six neighborhoods. These
neighborhoods are on the basis of kinship relationships. There are
two in the Thracian section and four in the Caucasian section.
The village has nearby villages such as Metallikon, South East 628
1 1/2 miles, Vaptistis, South West 1 3/4 miles, Castanies, 2 361
miles North West, and North East is Stayrohori, 1 1/2 miles.
There is a hard-surfaced road which connects all these villages 491
to Megali Vrisi.

A people of the Soil and their Mobility for the last 25 Years.

In spite of the fact that the people of Megali Vrisi are a people 167
of the soil, yet some of them were the victims of the great 722
destructive waves of war. The Caucasians were rather stable in
their own country, and this forced movement, due to communism,
was the first of its kind in their lives for many generations. The
un-/11/fortunate Thracians, because of their position in the much
fought Balkan states, had to move very regularly from their village.
I was often told that this was the fourth village they were building [648]
in less than 14 years, due to the Greco-Turkish war, the Greco-
Bulgarian war, the first world war and the war of 1920 between
Turkey and Greece. After the end of each war the survivors would
return back to their village from their place of exile. One could
almost read in their faces the effect of the hardships they had
been through. The effect is noticed by the type of life they 511
developed which has already become a part of their whole philosophy 167
of living in this world. Small temporary houses--not much furniture,
no mattresses, a straw mat and two heavy hand woven
blankets for cover--a kettle to cook in, one common bowl for the
whole family to eat in, one suit of clothes and few implements.
In case of forced movement the wife and the husband are able to
carry everything they have on their backs. Usually mobility makes
a person cosmopolitan-minded and good mannered, but it had
the opposite effect on these people. This may be due to the
conditions under which they had to move.

/11 cont./ 000
conditions under which they had to move. At the present time 464
there is some kind of temporary mobility such as working in other 166
villages or sections for wages but they return back /12/ home
again. The type of land distribution obliges every farmer to stay
where he is. No one is allowed to sell his land nor hire it to any- [425]
one else. As soon as he does this he loses his ownership. With [427]
the increasing population and with ever-decreasing returns from
the soil the future may present us with great mobility problems
of the young men.

Kinship Groups.

Kinship group solidarity is very strong among Caucasians and 602
less among Thracians. Due to the compound family system which [596]
has already broken down since the distribution of the land by the [178]
government, one finds neighborhoods with strong kinship ties. [621]
Next to the family is the kinship group. Intermarriage is pro- [582]
hibitive among these groups. The kinship group is very different
from the usual type that we know. If there is a widow or orphans [736]
or aged men or women, members of the kinship group feel under [737]
sacred obligation to care for them as they would do for the mem-
bers of their family.

Historical Background.

We do not have any historical data to show us the date of the 175
first settlers of this village but the new /13/ resettlers came in 621
1922. It had had three different conquerors; the Turks in 1448, the
Bulgarians in 1912, and the Greeks in 1913. It also served as the [712]
headquarters of Allied armies of the First World War. The trenches
that surround it and the heavy concrete fortifications show its im-
portance as a military post. People have come and gone.
Nationals changed hands of the village, but the storks still find [136]
the same trees and roofs for their nests convenient, regardless of
the nationality of the inhabitants. If the storks could speak the
language they would tell the people of the futility of the differ-
entiating nationalism. Houses were torn down and new ones built,

/13 cont./ 175
the minaret was replaced by the church steeple but the storks kept 621
the same nests for many generations. No one knows so well the history of the village as the storks do. Language and religious differences have done more harm to humanity than any good. Human beings of the same Creator because of language and religious differences kill each other and take turns in occupying the village.

PART II. The Family, The focus of Megali Vrisi Life.

121

A functional study of the family offers the best method of understanding the complex behavior patterns operative in this institution. Moreover it is by such /14/ analysis that the significance of the family group in a culture may be determined.

The Economic Function.

The economic function of the families in Megali Vrisi community is very important and needs some consideration. Farming 241 594
is the only means of livelihood and consumes a large part of the time of men, women and children. The general procedure for gaining a livelihood has been fixed throughout centuries. Due to climatic conditions the type of crops that can be raised is limited and even some of these are prohibitive. A crop that in the past 249
brought them the largest income was opium poppies, a narcotic plant, but the League of Nations has prohibited the sale of this product. Another product that has many times left the farmer to speculate about future prospects in price was tobacco. This crop unlike many other crops that have followed the evolutionary type of adjustment, has tended to follow independently its sharp ups and downs. Tobacco, unlike other crops, involves a great amount [435]
of skilled labor and it is a product that is handled by a few manufacturing companies that tend to set the price as they please. [464]
Both of the above crops are prohibited. The government-subsidized 243
/15/ wheat has replaced everything. Regardless of the effect of 654
this policy on the land, rotation principles and social effects on the

/55 cont./
The low water table of only 18 to 24 feet, the flat land that 241
will make irrigation easy, the nearness to the railroad station and
to a big city, are the outstanding privileges of the farmer of
Megali Vrisi to shift his farming methods and produce enough to
improve his family living conditions. Nothing could meet his
economic needs better than the combination of dairying with
small cereals.

/56/ Cooperative Activities. A village system and the type 621 ●
of farming such as in Megali Vrisi makes cooperative movement 476
essential. The limited capital of the individual farmer makes it [241]
hard to conduct his farming operations successfully. The type of [474]
living together has brought them the spirit of cooperation. Before
any kind of organized cooperative movement started, there was
already very close cooperation among the villagers in hiring a
common shepherd, sharing alike in the erection and care of the
school and church, repairing the roads, helping each other at
harvest and in numerous other ways. The cooperative spirit was [866]
taught to them in the family from the type of family life they were
living. Nothing explains so well their success in being able to
establish themselves in the village, in such a short time as work-
through the cooperative to help each other.

Since the settlement of the village the people organized a 241
cooperative with a capital of $15,000. A threshing machine and 474
a tractor of 64 horsepower was bought. All the farmers thresh
their cereals and pay 11% of the crop. With the accumulated [407]
capital a flour mill with four grinding stones was built. The flour [256]
mill, besides serving the village, draws customers from the neigh-
boring villages. The flour mill charges 3% /57/ of the grain.
The cooperative organized a grocery which serves the members. [444]
It also bought 3 improved pure-bred bulls for the village herd. [232]
The cooperative has its own 15 acres of land where it conducts
experiments for the farmers of the village with fertilizers, seeds
and grass plants. All loans from the Agricultural Bank are made
through the cooperative. All the Caucasians are members, but
only 65% of the Thracians are members. The cooperative is one [621]

/57 cont./
of the outstanding institutions in the village which guides the people 241
in keeping accounts and in taking active part in appointing officers 474
every year. [621]

The yearly meeting of the cooperative lasts 2 days and all the men who served in the army take active part. After the committee presents its accounts and accomplishments and its future program, a discussion starts from different members either praising or criticising the work of the existing committee. Different proposals for improvement are made and finally it ends with a vote for a new committee of six. During these two days of discussion people learn from each other how to judge and evaluate certain deeds of the cooperative.

The government, understanding the importance of the co-
operative has organized the Ministry of Cooperatives /58/ under [647]
the auspices of the Agricultural Bank. The effect of the cooperative on the people is great not only on the economic life but also on their social life as well. It draws the people close together and they think not in terms of their immediate needs but of their future welfare.

Every year the cooperative sends two students to the high [741]
school, gives prizes to the farmers that raise good seed and better animals, gives financial aid to the poor, and helps the unfortunate sick to go to hospitals. These are signs of the role the cooperative can play in the near future.

Besides unifying the whole village into an economic unit, it [621]
also is becoming a center of spreading higher ideals among the people. Its powers at the present are restricted due to the lack of experienced men with foresight. There are possibilities for one to do more in devising community programs by working with the cooperative.

Farm Techniques. The biblical type of farming is still the 241
kind that yields the greater returns with the least cost. The animal [492]
power is composed of oxen with a yoke and an iron plow. The
wooden plow still has its /59/ blessings for certain soils. In soils [407]

/65 cont./

Medical care. The only village in the area that has the best 758
medical service is Megali Vrisi. The efforts of the nurse and the 759
doctor slowly are gaining ground and more and more the people [178
follow their principles of caring for the sick. The newly-erected 743]
hospital in the nearby city of Kilkis provides care for the inhabitants
of the area free of charge. If the patient is very sick he
usually is taken there, where he can find specialized doctors.

The construction of the living houses is so poorly done in the 758
village that the care of the sick under such conditions is hard. 362
The windows are small and the mud floor with severe cold winds
of the winter and no proper fuel to warm the house makes it
harder yet to care for the sick.

The mutual assistance of relatives in sickness as well as of 758
neighbors is great. People at times of /66/ great difficulties
help each other, not only through labor but by giving each other 476
food and even money. Especially is this characteristic of this 621
people to share alike each other's burdens and partake actively
in their grief and sorrow.

The Faith Healer. People of experience and cleverness perform 755
certain magical performances that convince the people of
their ability to command the spirits. Most of the inhabitants of
Megali Vrisi believe them and spend money and time to visit
them. People suffering from chronic diseases, or if born with [842]
defects of the body, or if unable to bear any child, find as the
answer to their discouraged condition the faith healers.

Some Saints who perform miracles for donating to them; 755
a lamb, a hen, a goat, or a cow, may, in return, act favorably 782
for the patient. Priests praying for the sick or for the crippled 776
are not uncommon. On special holidays, certain churches fill
up with such sick and crippled people. Some sleep in the church [793]
for weeks without food and pray continuously to the Saint.
Stories circulate that some one saw the Saint riding on the horse, [787]
are very common. Sometimes these saints actually do heal indirectly
local pains, even of the partly crippled. Even doctors

/73 cont./ 178
fertilizing methods or rotation methods or introduction of new 476
legume plants or a new variety of wheat. As a rule, their effect 242
on the farmers is great with definite results. 874

Thus the future farmers of Megali Vrisi, working cooperatively,
felt the need of adopting new methods and passing on to others
the results of their /74/ investigations. It is surprising to know
how effectively the cooperative project has tied up these fellows
in undertaking to do other jobs useful for their village.

The individual project idea was a failure. People who live [621] ●
in the same village, still under the patriarchial type of family
life and whose problems are so closely interwoven, cannot help
but cooperate and support whole-heartedly cooperative work.
This very same idea led those boys to build a community hall 476
and a stage for theatrical shows. The whole structure was built 621
by personal work and what money was saved from theatrical shows
at Christmas. The group learned Christmas carols and sang them [345]
to every house in the village. The contributions from this event [533]
were used for the poor of the village. The small reforestation [735]
project which was started by this group has led to the development [314]
of the "Day of the Green", at which day everyone in the village
planted a tree on the hill. [185]

The yearly athletic day event that provides an enjoyable [526]
gathering for the village was planned by the young men.

/75/ One can easily foresee the future of such a community [874]
which will be handled by people who learned to cooperate so well
in their youth. This vocational education meant more to the
lives of these young men than what they got from the grammar
school.

Invasion of adult education. The Greek government, feeling 873
great responsibility toward these people, who during the wars of [658]
1912-1913, 1914-1918, and 1920-1922, lost the chance of attending
schools, provided special evening lessons in each village.
The lessons were handled by the teacher in the local school and
thus many of these men and women had a chance to learn how

/82 cont./
peaceful rest of their dead. They donate to the church either 794
money or wheat. On St. Nicolas day, the people from remote [769]
villages bring either a chicken, a pig, a cow, a calf, a sheep,
or a goat to the church as a present. Numerous animals are lined [437]
in the yard of the church which are sold in auction the same day.
/83/ Every Sunday morning at the church service a tray is passed
to the people for contributions. The selling of candles brings an
appreciable amount of money. The church has its fields which [427]
are either worked or hired to others to swell the income of the
church.

Part VIII Living Together.

Mutual aid. Both groups, the Thracians and the Caucasians, 621 ●
before settling in this village had a civilization of their own.
The isolation of the Caucasians in the interior part of mountainous
Caucasus has developed a unique type of civilization mostly built 596
around their community life. Here they had the compound type
of family organized under the direct rule of the oldest in the
family. In spite of the large number in the family the work was
divided every day among all. Every one did his best with no
complaint. The men gave blind obedience to the head of the
family and the women to the mother. The obedience was so
strict that misunderstanding would seldom occur. Every one was
specialized in his or her own work. All buying and selling was
done by the head of the family. No one could smoke, speak, nor
could sit by the head of the family unless told to do so. A strictly
military type of rules were observed. The father decided the
marriage age of his son and this usually would coincide with the
need of more labor in the family. Sometimes /84/ the need for
labor was so great that the age of 15 was thought practical to give
the solution for extra labor. The grandma was responsible for
the education of the children either in household work or school
work. The children call their mother by her first name and instead
call the grandma, mother.

[Caucasus]

/84 cont./

The village was ruled by "Gerousia", a group composed of 621
old respected people. It is interesting here to note that even today 623
the Greek Senate is called "Gerousia". This "Gerousia" would meet when necessary to discuss certain problems concerning their village. They had no definite calendar for meeting nor approved place for meetings. There were two dates well observed for meetings. One was St. Demeter's day -- October 26th -- for deciding to hire a village shepherd for the cattle and a guard for the fields. Another meeting which was fairly definite, was St. Constantin's day -- May 24th -- at which the redistribution of the land was
decided for the coming seven years. It was one of the well- 621
observed economic principles to redistribute the pasture for farm- 423
ing and leave the cultivated land for pasture. Due to the increase or decrease of the family members the land had to be redistributed /85/ according to the number of heads in the family. Once the land was given, the owner could use it as he pleased but could not pass it on to the relatives or friends. The land belonged to the village. There was another order which every one had to follow strictly. No one was allowed to increase his livestock on the community pasture, but he could increase it on hired pasture land from near by villages.

Away from every kind of complicated civilization the Cau- 621
casians had a world of their own and found it better to preserve it centuries after centuries without adulterating it with the modern civilization.

Most of the church, school and community problems were 621
solved by the "Gerousia" without a general meeting or vote. The 623
decision of "Gerousia" on any problem was final. Local conflicts and neighborhood grievances were taken care of by "Gerousia". Repairing school buildings, or church, or taking care of the poor and unfortunate were closely followed up by this group.

This cooperative spirit for mutual aid is rarely found among 476
any people except the Caucasians. /86/ The rush harvest season 621
is shared alike by all. Building houses, threshing and transportation of agricultural goods is done through borrowed labor. If any, by

8:Stephanides--55 I, Y-3 (ca. 1933-1939) 1941 EH1 Greece EH1
Megali Vrisi

[Caucasus]

/86 cont./

misfortune, loses his house or livestock, the whole village shares in providing everything. Seldom does one find any one suffering in a Caucasian village. It has been a common expression among other groups to say that the Caucasians as individuals are worthless but as a group none could surpass them. This shows how effective this compound family life influenced the person's whole behavior and attitude. 476 621

Fertilizing the fields was unknown to these people. Even livestock manure was not valued very much and was used as fuel. Their method of improving the fertility of the land was to rest it for several years and the longer the rest the better for the field. For better results it was advisable to let the animals pasture the land. They always thought there was something magic in the hoofs of the animals. This was proven to them by grazing the winter wheat and barley early in the spring. They found better stooling and more yield. Even today they still believe it but cannot afford to try it under the new climatic conditions. (The reason why the hoofs had so much magic is explained as follows. /87/ Due to thawing of the ground the roots of the wheat and barley plants were exposed to the air and pasturing early in the spring was a method of packing the soil instead of using a roller to pack it so as to protect the roots of the plants.) 241

The culture of the Thracian group was just the opposite of that of the Caucasians. Although at the door-step of Asiatic and European civilization, these people have lived far from both. The frequent movement from their village due to continuous wars in that area, and the hardships they suffered has changed the life of each one of them and has made them pessimistic. They look at life and on the world as a whole with indignation and scornful attitude. This continuous movement has forced upon them the belief that everything was in vain and that life had little difference from animal life. The Thracians are strictly individualistic, not interested in community affairs or group life. They look at every one with suspicion, believe no one except themselves. They have no benevolent spirit and the misery of their neighbors make no 621 167 181 [178]

181

/87 cont./

621 [167] impression on them. Even their wives and children are treated like slaves. The suffering of their children or their wives moves them /88/ very little. How much the hard life of wars affected them it is hard to tell.

Here on the one hand we have the unfriendly, resistant, apathetic, inferior Thracian, while on the other hand we have the friendly, frank, responsive, broad-minded and feeling-superior of the Caucasian. The pessimistic, the unconscious, unstable, unmannered, stupid and unreliable Thracian, to live with the optimistic, sensitive, self-assured, stable, mannered, intelligent and reliable Caucasian.

621 178 241 Here were two groups, one ready to sacrifice time and material to improve the new village, while the other group could do nothing that was beyond the home yard. The Thracians as farmers are hard working and are contented with the old wooden plow, a one-room house, a kettle to cook in and a bowl for the whole family to eat from. Their agriculture was still primitive and fertilizers were unknown. The Thracians, like the Caucasians, believed too much in magic and that the good harvest year was largely in the hands of the divine spirit.

621 476 Living together was hard for both groups under such conditions. The Caucasians, traditionally influenced by their community improvement ambition, started with /89/ enthusiasm to build and improve what they already found. The mutual aid, such as in barn-raising, exchange of labor, lending teams, lending tools, lending money and even food stuffs, caring for the sick and comforting the bereaved is widespread. The rush of harvesting and threshing is done cooperatively. When one once was questioned, "How do you have such a fine mutual assistance", the answer was as follows: "Well, you see one side of the picture only, that is the work part of it. The people who cooperate have [533] the greatest fun in working, eating and drinking together. Some of the love songs find expression at such occasions like harvesting or threshing." The Caucasians were taught in their own world how to get more [illegible] of life. They know that happiness was born [152]

/89 cont./
a twin, and when they mourn they mourn together. Their sentimental 621●
songs are always tinged with the air of sadness. Even at 476
the funerals they sing the same songs which they sing when they [533]
have a merry time. Mutual aid is the characteristic quality of
the Caucasians in their work, in their joy, and in their sorrow. [152]
On the contrary, the Thracians are strictly individualistic and
regard mutual aid as the sign of laziness.

/90/ Conflicts. Regardless of the mutual aid and the cooperation 623
they have, the conflicts are very prevalent. They 627
occur either among the two groups or among the members of one
group. The causes of the conflicts are for controlling the village 578
cooperative, the mayorship of the village, or as a consequence of
a proposal to marriage which was declined. It is important here
to note that regardless of the conflict situation if the "Gerousia"
wanted to finish a certain community project they all shared alike
the burden. In spite of the official power the cooperative has
and the organized super-imposed government mayor has, the
"Gerousia", the unofficial body of old men is the real axis or the
center of any unanimous movement. Conflicts which are temporarily [692]
settled by the mayor or by the goverment courts eventually
reach the peaceful settlement of the "Gerousia" who know so well
how to make the people forgive each other. The judge at the
courts reads the law and enforces the punishment according to the
act, but "Gerousia" knows so well the past of every one and even
the type of family for one or two generations and touches the pride
of every one by enumerating the good qualities and good dispositions
of his father or grandfather. The position of "Gerousia" is
that of a father and the effect they have on the person is lasting.
Jealousies, small /91/ fights and family difficulties are settled
by "Gerousia". This group is a government within a government,
officially unknown, but it stands as the only guiding hand for the
village community. At times of great distress and difficulties,
people consult the "Gerousia". The church, the priest, the teacher [554]
and the doctor do not have as constructive an influence as the
"Gerousia" does. It is not a voted body but has the unofficial

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578

/91 cont./
general approval of all. The punishment of the "Gerousia" is ostracism until the person repents and asks forgiveness. The fear and respect towards "Gerousia" is greater than to anybody or group of people. One of the young men planning to divorce his wife because she could not bear any child, told of his experience with the "Gerousia". "Their words are sharper than the sharpest swords".

621●
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Latent Neighborhood Conflict Attitudes. The jealousy of the nearby villages toward the successful cooperation of the villagers of Megali Vrisi was noticed many times. The success of Megali Vrisi in bringing the doctors who serve the area to their village, and in making it the center for the health project, naturally created hard feelings with the competing villages. The success with which the Caucasians of Megali Vrisi worked /92/ in organizing a young men's organization, increasing the number of teachers, building their church and having one of the well-organized cooperatives, has made it the leading village of the area.

621
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Active Conflicts. One of the active conflicts that exists in Megali Vrisi is the one between the Thracians and Caucasians. Each group in trying to preserve its identity tries to dominate the other by having more power in controlling the village council and cooperative. The Thracians as a minority, have never had any chance to get to any office for the last 16 years. The strong opposition they had from the Caucasians, united them on every question raised, and their inability to compete with the Caucasians has developed within every Thracian the illogical type of opposition. "Vote it down if it is a Caucasian proposal, whether good or bad." Regardless of this opposition, the Caucasians undertook to carry on their constructive community work by bearing the share of the Thracians too. Conflicts among different kinship groups were of a minor type and never developed to such a magnitude as to have destructive results. The "Gerousia" checked them.

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[623]
[692]

The conflict between the Thracians and the Caucasians was beyond the power of the "Gerousia". The Thracians never had any "Gerousia" and as a result took more cases to the court and spent more /93/ money and time for it. The conflicts among the

/93 cont./ 627
Thracians were of the worst type and usually would end with
bloodshed.

Social Control. Formal and Informal Aspects of Control.
The "Gerousia" usually exercised a degree of informal control [623]
over its members through its generally-accepted definitions of [692]
what is right or wrong. The government courts had little influence
in this. There was no stealing among the Caucasians; many [685]
families would leave their houses unlocked and work in the fields;
their implements scattered in the yards and the poultry nests out
in the open.

Drinking is among the forms of behavior against which the 626
women of Megali Vrisi voice their disapproval. All the men drink, 273
but actually there are few who drink for the sake of getting drunk.
When I ventured to ask some of those who get drunk, "Why they
do it", almost everyone of them said, "to forget the miserable
life". Some of them, due to deportations and wars, have lost
all property, wives and children and the only comfort they find
is to get drunk and get sentimental and weep.

/94/ Community Events. The recently organized community 543
fairs represent the inception of social organization for the pro- 621 ●
motion of recreation. The purpose of these fairs was competition
in agricultural products and wholesome recreation, which meant 476
so much to these villagers, but social conflict soon discontinued 578
these fairs. Outsiders were invited to talk at these occasions and
athletic events would give it a happy ending.

The Use of Leisure Time and Visiting. One of the major 461
problems that confronts every one working in Megali Vrisi is how 517
to use the excess leisure time more profitably. This excess leisure
time is the cause of conflicts and drunkenness. Due to the nature 241
of their agriculture the rush work season comes in the fall for two [578]
months and two months in summer. The rest of the time very
little work is done in the fields. During the winter months from
December to April there is no farm work except the chores which
are done by the women. This long slack season is an acute
problem for the farmers themselves. From morning until late in

/100 cont./
of their occupation but rather because of certain peculiar personal qualities which they possess. Such a cast of characters is very evident in Megali Vrisi. Most of these are due to their ability to speak fluently, or to tell stories, read and interpret the news from the papers or forecast future events. Some of these rank the lowest in the economic scale and their influence is not effective beyond the village boundaries. These personalities become the central guides for the decisions of many persons. Both Thracian and Caucasians have these types of personalities.. 156 554

Community organization. The village of Megali Vrisi is a loosely organized village. The various groups and associations are independently organized and function without any cooperation of the other whatsoever. There is competition and constant conflict as to which one is the leading group in the village, but in spite of the conflicts and lack of cooperation among the groups, compared with the neighboring villages /101/ the village is the leading one. This unexplainable progress is mostly due to the constructive and not the destructive type of competition of the different groups, which instead of hindering them is enabling them to get ahead. According to Professor Sanderson, "The coordination of group activities is the heart of social organization insofar as it is related to community welfare, and the importance of community organization in the every day life of its people is apparent." The wholesome competition among the different groups for accomplishing their group projects may be due to the following: 621 476 178

1. Within every member of the different organizations or associations there is an inherent feeling of mutual aid and that the progress of each group is the progress of their village.

2. There are persons who hold office in more than two groups and thus there is this indirect cooperation.

3. It is an accepted principle that each group follows its well-defined program without expecting it to be considered as the only one that needs support.

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4. The different organizations are a part of the people. Nothing is introduced by outsiders nor advocated by any one person, but through centuries have become an accepted principle of their community life to watch their community improve from all around.

Conclusions to be drawn from the village of Megali Vrisi. 621•

1. The new village has two distinct type of people with their pattern of customs. 105

2. The Government's attempt to mould the customs of these groups into one may face difficulties at the beginning.

3. Both groups semi-primitive in the sense of having:

   a. Patriarchal pattern type of family.
   b. Father having the buying and selling
   c. Both women and children doing farm work, unending toil of women.
   d. Education or training rests with the grandparents.
   e. Agriculture for making a living
   /103/f. Common land and pasture; no ownership.
   g. Lack of knowledge of fertilizers.
   h. Magic strongly believed by both groups.
   i. Purpose of marriage was to have the labor of women and for raising children.
   j. Land divided in many patches and scattered.
   k. The "Gerousia" as the only powerful and effective group in community government.
   l. Religion of paganistic type.
   m. Business in its primitive form of exchanging goods.
   n. Mutual aid very characteristic.

The low cash income, backward farm techniques, with too much emphasis on the subsidized wheat crop, poor housing and household equipment, inadequately balanced diet, disregard of proper sanitation and other preventive measures against disease, inadequate medical attention, absence of recreational opportunities, impractical religion, slow educational processes without vital

8:Stephanides--65 I, Y-3 (ca. 1933-1939) 1941 EH1 Greece EH1
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relations to the life of the people, and burdensome work of wives and children, are conditions which are suggestive of planning objectives.